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Costume, Weapons, and Implements of the Indian Tribes of Guiana.

# INDIAN MISSIONS IN GUIANA.

BY

THE REV. W. H. BRETT,

MISSIONARY IN CONNEXION WITH THE SOCIETY FOR THE  
PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.



LONDON: GEORGE BELL, 186, FLEET STREET.

1851.



TO THE  
REV. ERNEST HAWKINS, B.D.

SECRETARY TO THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL  
IN FOREIGN PARTS.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE following work, undertaken at your request, contains an account of our Missions among the various Indian tribes of Guiana, from the year of their commencement until the present time.

Having been the first of the Society's Missionaries exclusively engaged in the work of conversion of the Indians in that country, a great portion of the narrative is merely a description of the things which I have heard, seen, or experienced; with other information supplied by my fellow-labourers in that portion of the Lord's vineyard.

I have also endeavoured to afford such additional information as may give a general though imperfect idea of the progress of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in that part of the world, and show the arduous work that is still before us.

An attempt has also been made to describe the appearance, customs, and habits of the Indians and other races; and the nature of the country which they inhabit.

May the blessing of the Great Head of the Church ever accompany all her endeavours to extend the knowledge of salvation through his glorious Name, among distant and barbarous nations.

I remain,

my dear Sir,

Your's very faithfully,

W. H. BRETT.

ETWALL, *April* 14, 1851.



# CONTENTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE COAST AND ITS POPULATION.

Situation and extent of our Colony—The Coast—Scene in Georgetown—Various Races—The Negroes—Their former progress—Obia superstitions—Immigrants—The Portuguese—The Coolies: their appearance, and costume—Habits—Idolatrous festivals—Barbarous spectacle—Interviews with them; their want of feeling—Examples—Review. . . . . 1

---

## CHAPTER II.

### THE INTERIOR AND ITS INHABITANTS.

Britain, God's chosen instrument in propagating the Gospel—Aboriginal inhabitants of America superseded in the public attention by the natives of Polynesia—Acquisition of three colonies in Guiana—Sketch of the Interior—A day in the Forest: its productions and scenery; Birds, Insects, Reptiles, and Quadrupeds—Indians: their persons, costume, food, habitations, canoes, and way of life described—The Gospel the only civilizing power. . . . . 26

---

## CHAPTER III.

### MISSIONS TO THE INDIAN TRIBES.

Indian Superstitions—Opinions respecting Guiana—El Dorado—First Colonists—Their contests with the Indians—Afterwards use their help against the Maroon Negroes—the Moravians—Present Missions—Various Tribes—Fate of the Mission to the Macusis. . 54

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE INDIAN MISSION ON THE POMEROON.

Situation—Causes which led to the foundation of the Mission—First residence of the Missionary—Unsuccessful efforts among the Waraus and Arawâks—First converts—Visit to the Chief and settlements of the Arawâks—Its results—Sickness of the Missionary—Progress of the Gospel. . . . . 68

---

## CHAPTER V.

## THE ARAWAKS.

Their character—Weapons—Name—Division of families—Marriage customs—Polygamy—Birth and rearing of children—Paiwari feasts—Funeral customs—Chiefs—Law of retaliation—Melancholy event—Progress of the Mission—Improvement in the people—Baptism—Mode of instruction—Indian astronomy—Use of pictures—Manners of school children—Prayer in the native language—Death of Mr. Duke—Visit to the Akawini lake. . . . . 96

---

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CARIBS.

Account of the writer's first visit to the country of the Caribs—Their costume and appearance—Attendance at the Mission—Their national character and customs—A glance at their condition and habits during the last century—Their cruel wars—Ancient Chiefs—Assistance to the Colonists in 1763—Cannibalism—Favourable change. . . . . 118

---

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE WACAWOIOS.

Journey through the Caribi country to a Wacawoio settlement—Reception and results of the visit—Description of the Wacawoios—Their persons, ornaments, and treacherous character—The blow-pipe and worali, or arrow poison—The haiarri, and method of

poisoning fish—Their roving disposition, and long journeys for traffic and plunder—The small-pox—State of the Indian Mission in 1842. . . . .	135
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LOWER DISTRICT OF POMEROON.

Nature of the District—Missionary Expedition to the Manawarin and Wakapoa; its results—Maguarri dance of the Arawáks—Difficulties among these people—Better prospects—Caribs in Manawarin erect a rude place of worship—Attendance at Caledonia. . . . .	149
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

---

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE WARAUS.

Visit of Irai, the Caribi chief—The Bishop of Guiana visits the Missions—Removal of the Upper Mission to the Hill—Character and habits of the Waraus—Unsuccessful efforts among them—Surprising change—Another Mission for their benefit commenced—Mr. Nowers appointed—Exertions of the Post-holder and the Indians. . . . .	165
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

---

## CHAPTER X.

### THE INDIAN MISSION AT WARAMURI.

Conversation with an old Warau—Erection of the Mission Buildings—Sickness of Missionaries—Extraordinary Imposture—Long drought—Waramuri Mission nearly destroyed by fire—Famine—Mortality by Dysentery—Progress of the Mission—Distant Indians desire a Teacher. . . . .	183
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

---

## CHAPTER XI.

### TRIALS.

Sickness and death in the Mission family—Temporary abandonment of Waramuri—Dangerous passage across the sea—The Pomeroon	
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Mission—Extraordinary circumstance—Panic among the Caribs—  
 Flourishing state of the Mission—Abandoned for a time—Faithful-  
 ness of the Arawâks—The Bishop's visit—Warimuri and Pomeroon  
 again supplied with teachers . . . . . 196

---

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE ARUABISI COAST.

Situation of the Ituribisi—Its Inhabitants—Efforts of the Rector of  
 St. John's for their conversion—Success—Account of the Mission  
 at his residence—The Capoue, Quacabuca, and Tapacuma lakes—  
 Account of the Indians residing in that neighbourhood. . . 211

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE MAHAICONI MISSION.

Situation of the Mahaiconi—The Bishop's visit to the Mahaica,  
 and its result—Visit to the Mahaiconi—Indian Assembly, and  
 Maquarri Dance—Establishment of the Mission—Its subsequent  
 history . . . . . 219

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CHARACTER, HABITS, AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE INDIANS.

Their indolence and apathy—Acute observation—Habits, Hospitality  
 &c.—Drunkenness—Polygamy—Revenge—Superstitions—The Yau-  
 hahu or Demons—The system of sorcery or Piaï-ism—Anecdotes—  
 The Orehu, her qualities—Indian Tradition. . . . . 229

---

## CHAPTER XV.

### DIFFICULTIES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

The various Languages spoken by the Indian Tribes—Examples and  
 Remarks—Other difficulties—Unhealthiness of some of the River  
 Districts—Second abandonment of Warimuri . . . . . 252

## CHAPTER XVI.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS.

Outward Change in the Indians—Attention to Religious Services—  
 Their Dwellings, Industry, Clothing, &c.—Respectable appearance  
 of Christian Indian Congregations—Comfort afforded by the  
 Christian Religion to the Sick and Dying—The Burial-Ground—  
 Amelioration in the condition of the Female Sex—Indian Marriage  
 Feast—The Rattles of the Sorcerers given up—Condition of our  
 Missions at the close of 1850. . . . . 260

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

## EARLY HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE INDIANS.

Difficulty of tracing the Origin of the barbarous Tribes of America—  
 The Macusis—The Waraus—Early Accounts of the Caribs—Their  
 Discovery in the Islands—Supposed Origin—The Wacawoios—The  
 Arawâks—Accounts of early Discoverers—Traditions of that Tribe  
 —Of the Spaniards—Of their Contests with the Caribs—Struggles  
 of Indians with the early Colonists, and with the revolted Negroes  
 —Present blessings. . . . . 274

---

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE REMAINING HEATHEN TRIBES.

Diminution of the numbers of the Indian Tribes—Their probable  
 Fate—Their readiness to embrace the Religion of Christ—En-  
 couragement to extend the Sphere of Labour—Suggestions—  
 Heathen Tribes enumerated by Sir R. Schomburgk—Possible  
 Benefit which they might derive in course of years from the Con-  
 version of the Macusis. . . . . 295

## ILLUSTRATIONS.



COSTUME, Weapons, and Implements of the Indian Tribes of	
Guiana . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Jaguar . . . . .	<i>Vignette Title-page</i>
Indian Snake-Catcher . . . . .	Page 36
Map . . . . .	60
The Cokarito Palm . . . . .	112
Mission Chapel, Pomeroon, 1843 . . . . .	147
Maquarri Dance . . . . .	157
Caribi Encampment on the Upper Pomeroon . . . . .	169
Waramuri Mission in 1846 . . . . .	187
Assembly of Arawáks at Mahaiconi, 1844 . . . . .	223
Indian Sorcerer . . . . .	244
Indian Mission at the Hill, Pomeroon, 1846 . . . . .	272





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# BRITISH GUIANA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE COAST AND ITS POPULATION.

Situation and extent of our Colony—The Coast—Scene in Georgetown—Various Races—The Negroes—Their former progress—Obia superstitions—Immigrants—The Portuguese—The Coolies: their appearance and costume Habits—Idolatrous festivals—Barbarous spectacle—Interviews with them; their want of feeling—Examples—Review.

GUIANA is an extensive country, comprising the north-eastern part of South America. It is situated between two of the largest rivers in the world, the Amazon and the Orinoco. That portion of it which is possessed by the British lies to the westward of the Corentyn; which divides it from Dutch Guiana, or Surinam. It is very extensive, containing the counties of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice; and its boundaries, as claimed by our government, include an area of 76,000 square miles.

This is a surface of much greater extent than that of England and Wales; but its population is most scanty as compared with its size and resources. It is only a narrow strip of low land, the edge of the alluvial flat which forms the coast of this country,

that is in cultivation or at all thickly inhabited. This being low and level, appears very uninteresting when viewed from the sea. It is, however, laid out in beautiful plantations of sugar, coffee, plantains, and other provisions, which are produced in great abundance by the rich alluvial soil and tropical climate. No regular attempt has been made by the British to settle in the distant interior, the wide extent of which is as yet unoccupied, except by a thinly scattered population of the aboriginal natives.

Georgetown, the capital, presents a lively appearance. It is situated at the mouth of the river Demerara, on its eastern bank. Its streets are mostly wide, and traversed by canals or drains. The houses, which are of wood, are painted, and have verandahs; and are rendered pleasant by gardens, and the coconut and cabbage-palm trees which surround them. These stately trees, being mingled with the buildings of the city, give it a pleasing appearance, when viewed from an elevated position.

In the streets of Georgetown many a busy, motley group may be seen, composed of men, women, and children, of every shade of colour, and presenting a spectacle of great interest to a stranger from England, who may behold the native American surrounded by persons from Europe, Asia, and Africa. He may there see his own countrymen, either planters or engaged in merchandise. The Portuguese emigrants from Madeira, who are generally hucksters or petty traders, are there seen toiling beneath the hot sun, bearing a large canister of goods on one shoulder,

supported by a staff across the other—a hardworking and abstemious race. Hindoos from the East Indies are also there, brought to assist in the cultivation of the soil ; the Coolies from Calcutta, and their darker skinned brethren from Madras. These people often possess fine countenances, and slight well-made figures ; their showy oriental clothing, generally of white muslin, calico, or scarlet cloth, with turbans or small ornamented skull-caps for the head, forming a lively portion of the scene. But by far the most numerous class are the negroes, who form the great bulk of the labouring population, and considerably outnumber all the other races put together.

While gazing upon the busy scene, the stranger's attention may be arrested by a group differing in many respects from the others. By the bright copper tint of their skins, their long, glossy, straight, black hair, and, too frequently, by their very scanty clothing, may be recognised the Aborigines of the country. They usually bear in their hands little articles of their own manufacture for sale, such as small baskets of various shapes, bows and arrows, models of canoes and Indian houses, &c. Frequently parrots, monkeys, and other animals are added to their little stock, the price of which will supply the family with axes, cutlasses, hoes, and other necessary implements ; with perhaps a gun, and a few articles of clothing of European manufacture for the ensuing year—if indeed the elder ones can refrain from drinking rum, the bane and destroyer of their race.

From the manner of these children of the wilderness it is easy to perceive that they are more or less strangers to the habits of civilized life. The young ones stare around them, and seem bewildered by the various objects which meet their gaze. Their home is in the vast forest, and on the banks of some one of the rivers which intersect the interior of the country. They sometimes visit the coast and the town, but only for the purpose of procuring the articles before mentioned ; after which they retire to their abode in the forest until necessitated to seek a fresh supply.

It is the principal object of the following pages to describe some of the efforts which have been made for the conversion of these Indians from heathenism to Christianity ; to represent their present condition, both temporal and spiritual, and to give an idea of their habits and way of life ; and also of the nature of missionary labour among them, as far as the personal experience of the writer and his brethren in this interesting work will allow.

Before, however, quitting the coast of Guiana, and entering on any description of the interior, it may not be uninteresting to give a brief view of the present state of the different races, which, as was before observed, occupy the cultivated part of the country. It will be at once easily surmised that the position of a clergyman, in the midst of a population so varied, must be one of great labour and difficulty. It is, in fact, (except in the matter of personal privation,) quite as arduous, and more unsatisfactory, than

that of the Missionary among the Indian tribes of the interior.

The Negroes of this, and of the other West Indian Colonies, were, as is well known, formerly in a state of slavery. They were originally brought from Africa, and were of various heathen nations. By the noble measure of the Emancipation they became, on the 1st of August, 1834, apprenticed labourers. This apprenticeship ceased in August 1838, since which time they have enjoyed the blessings of complete freedom.

Considerable care was taken that they should receive instruction in the duties of religion; and provision was made for that purpose by the liberality of the colonists, their employers, with assistance from England. Parishes were formed, churches, chapels, and schools built along the line of coast, and zealous ministers appointed to labour among them.

These efforts for their real good were well seconded by the people themselves. Their improvement was rapid; and the willingness with which they came forward with large sums of money for religious purposes, deserves the highest praise. High hopes for their future well doing were confidently entertained by their best friends, which cannot be better expressed than in the eloquent language of the excellent and lamented Bishop Coleridge, who after noticing, in a charge to the clergy of Guiana in 1839, the eager liberality with which they came forward to assist in the erection of places of worship, thus speaks:—

“When the labouring classes of any community



can lay by so largely, and spend their earnings so holily and usefully, there must be a spirit working within them, which, under judicious and affectionate guidance, will settle down into a habit of contented and steady industry."

Few things have been more pleasing, than to see on the Sunday morning the black population issuing from the avenues of cocoa-nut or palm-trees on the different plantations, and bending their way along the public road to the house of God, to worship Him whom they justly regard as the author of their freedom. Many pleasing instances of Christian feeling, liberality, resignation in sickness, and happy death-beds, might be adduced, as showing the fruits of the Gospel among them. They exhibited, in most cases, both anxiety to receive Christian instruction, and a regard for those who faithfully laboured among them.

How encouraging, for instance, is the fact related to me by a brother clergyman, (one of the Society's Missionaries,) of the members of a small congregation contributing 250 dollars for the enlargement and repairing of the dwelling of their teacher ; and also purchasing a horse for his use, to save him the fatigue of walking some miles to visit the sick in that exhausting climate. Instances of this kind might easily be multiplied to a considerable extent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My informant also mentioned, as an instance of attachment, that on one occasion returning from duty later in the evening than usual, through an abandoned plantation, overgrown with low bush, and much infested at night with the jaguars or panthers of the country, (called there tigers,) he was followed by an elderly negro, named

Notwithstanding these pleasing circumstances, it must not be concealed that the advancement of the mass of the people has not equalled the expectations which were formed by their best friends. Some of the causes of this may be briefly stated, without seeking to excuse the negroes in the least where they are justly blameable.

To form a correct view, it is necessary first to consider the condition and habits of the negroes themselves. Many of them were Africans, thoroughly imbued with all the superstitions of their native country. Their children were also equally infected with them. Indeed, while the Christian religion was withheld from them, they had nothing but these superstitions to rest upon ; and they were consequently deeply rooted, and retain an influence on the minds even of those who are now professedly Christians.

An instance of this is seen in their superstitious veneration for the silk-cotton-tree. Many of them would on no account cut it down, believing that death would be the consequence. In the days of slavery, offerings were presented to some of these trees. It has been said that their forefathers were accustomed to meet under them to consult their priests, and to perform their superstitious ceremo-

Cesar, who, it seems, had entertained some degree of apprehension for his safety, and had carefully watched him, without his being aware of it, until he arrived at his house ; when he heard a voice exclaiming, "You are safe now, good-night ;" and looking round, saw the retiring figure of his faithful attendant.

nies ; and hence they became invested with a sacred character.<sup>1</sup>

But many of the superstitions of Obia, or negro witchcraft, are of a dark and malignant nature. The Gospel drove these abominations into obscure corners, but they were still practised in secret, and are believed in by many of the people.

I once attended an aged female, lying, as she thought, at the point of death, who confessed that she had “worked” a charm to cause the death of some unknown person who had stolen her fowls. This charm consisted in pounding certain herbs in a wooden mortar for nine days, with magical incantations. I have also heard among the negroes of the rivers, of women obstinately attributing the deaths of their children to others, whom they accused of having destroyed them, and confined their souls in *bottles*. These monstrous and absurd ideas, too lamentable for ridicule, will show, in some measure, the nature of the superstitions which still darken the minds of many ; but will hardly appear surprising to those who consider the popular ideas of witchcraft formerly so prevalent, and still lingering in our own country.

In addition to these innate superstitions, there have been powerful external causes working for a

<sup>1</sup> The silk-cotton is a large and handsome tree, growing to a considerable height and thickness : it is very straight, and covered with a strong, grey, prickly bark. Its trunk is free from branches to a considerable height. It sheds its leaves annually, and produces the silk-cotton every three years.



long period, to check the advancement of the black population of British Guiana.

After the emancipation, much less labour was performed by them than under the system of slavery. This was, of course, anticipated, but the falling off far exceeded the expectation. To remedy the serious loss to the estates, labourers were eagerly sought in other lands, and brought from every country where it was possible to procure them. Many of these were from Barbados, and the other islands, and generally of the worst class of people, whose example has greatly influenced the young. The well-disposed negroes would often complain of the injuries done by these immigrants, who have generally been foremost in every mischief since their introduction.

Thousands of Hindoos were also brought in, whose idolatrous ceremonies have been publicly performed. Some of these will be described, and must be seen to be of a nature calculated to produce an ill impression on the minds of people in a semi-barbarous state. The introduction of numerous bodies of Portuguese increased the evil which diversity of religion always must occasion.

While matters were gradually assuming an unpleasant appearance in the colony, a sort of crisis was produced by measures which increased the wealth of the foreign slave-holder, and gave an additional impulse to the slave trade ; while they ruined many proprietors of West Indian property, and occasioned pressure and discontent among all classes in the colony.

The negroes, unwilling or unable to understand that their employers were compelled to reduce their wages, and many of them listening to designing men, who persuaded them that if they yielded they would gradually be brought again to their former state of slavery, gave up work for a time ; the baser sort resorting to theft for subsistence, and to incendiary practices for revenge.

In the unsettled state of things in the beginning of 1849, impostors took occasion to revive the system of Obia, and carry it on to a degree which a short time before would have seemed utterly incredible. It is impossible to describe the abominable dances which are said to have taken place. Although most of the negroes express great horror at these things, yet being influenced both by superstition and fear, as the Obia people are said to be expert poisoners, few dared to complain to the authorities, unless they had received a grievous injury from them. Some of the ringleaders were apprehended, but the practices still continued.

At the time when every thing called for the utmost exertion, the Church's strength was curtailed by the withdrawal of a great portion of the support formerly granted for religious and educational purposes by the Colonial legislature, which felt itself compelled by the pressure of the times to reduce its former liberal allowance. In very large and populous parishes (some containing five or six places of worship), the rectors had not the assistance of a

single curate.<sup>1</sup> Education became much neglected. These circumstances have been attended with the greatest detriment to the black people, which must also prove injurious to others ; for the comfort and welfare of the whole community depend on the advancement of Christian principles among *them*. There can be no return to a former condition.

The Portuguese immigrants may be briefly described. Though brought from Madeira to Guiana for the purpose of agricultural labour, they manage to escape from that as soon as possible ; and, being a money-making people, soon contrive to set up in business for themselves in small stores for the sale of spirits, &c. Those who cannot attain to this position, become hucksters and pedlars, and their itinerant groups may be met with all over the country, each man bearing a heavy canister or package containing his goods. I have frequently seen them arrive in canoes at our Indian missions for the purposes of traffic.

Most of them were of course Roman Catholics, and priests of their own denomination have been provided ; though many pay little attention to their Church, and infinitely less to the requirements of the Gospel, of which they are, indeed, grossly ignorant.

There are, however, some Protestants among them, and we hope that the number will greatly increase. I have seen these read the Portuguese New Testa-

<sup>1</sup> The parishes of St. John and the Holy Trinity, Essequibo, are instances.

ment with great reverence and attention ; and I was once much struck with the circumstance of meeting a Protestant Portuguese female engaged alone in voluntary attendance on a poor negro woman, whose brutal husband had left her, though at the point of death. This and other instances show that many of the Portuguese are very well disposed, and though their pursuits are certainly most unfavourable to godliness, yet much good may be done among them.

The Coolies from Hindostan next demand our attention. Many thousands of these have been brought from the presidencies of Calcutta and Madras, the natives of which differ from each other in dialect and also in colour ; the former being of a deep tawny hue, while the latter are nearly black. Few of them possessed a knowledge of Christ, they being unhappily, almost without exception, followers of the superstitions of the Brahmins or of the false prophet Mohammed.

The general appearance of these people is very picturesque. When not at work, they usually wear a close vest of thin calico, with sleeves, and sometimes ornamented, while a long cloth is wrapped round their loins, which they gird up tightly when setting forth on a journey. The dress of the few women who have been brought over does not differ greatly from that of the men. They generally wear in addition a large cloth or veil, in which they envelop the head. They are fond of ornament, and those who can afford it wear massive silver rings both

on their wrists and ankles. The feet of both sexes are bare, or shod with rude sandals, which, with the girdle, earrings, ornaments for the nose, &c., forcibly remind the beholder of the representations of Scripture.

The sugar estates on which the people are located assume quite an oriental appearance, from the groups which may be seen on the banks of the canals washing their robes and other articles of finery, or scouring the brazen vessels from which they eat their rice and milk, and which they take pride in bringing to the highest degree of brightness. They do not, however, carry their cleanliness in other respects to a very high pitch, their dwellings being often very offensive ; nor can we boast of their temperance, it being a not unfrequent occurrence, to find a man, totally insensible from drunkenness, lying by the side of the road ; the long tuft of black hair streaming from his otherwise shaven head is, in such cases, apt to startle the horses of those that pass by.

Parties of from five to thirty of these people in their holiday attire may be met with, going to visit their friends, and arrange the preparations for some festival. But however interesting their appearance may be, it is impossible for the Christian to avoid the reflection, that they are of a race involved in the deepest and most awful bondage to Satan. They bear the distinguishing marks of the idols whom they serve upon their foreheads. These are traced in different shapes and colours, according to the sect to which they belong.



Though separated by a voyage of many thousands of miles from their ancient temples and the spots which have been defiled for ages by their idolatrous worship, they nevertheless have done their best to keep up the ceremonies to which they have been accustomed,—to create for themselves a Hindostan on the shores of Guiana. I will endeavour to describe an evening scene which I have witnessed more than once.

Let the reader place himself in imagination in front of one of the estates in Essequibo, on the evening of the full moon at the beginning of the year. The plantation may be one of those fast verging to abandonment ; but all will look beautiful in the moonlight, which is not strong enough to show the tokens of disorder and decay. Innumerable fireflies are flitting like sparks of fire amongst the rank vegetation. The more steady negroes are retiring to their cottages, and Coolies may be seen hastening by, with a quick step and their usual courteous “salaam.” They are going to join the procession of their countrymen, whose shouts may be heard from time to time, accompanied by the monotonous beating of the tom-toms or drums ; and soon the glare of numerous torches becomes visible beneath the dark trees which border the road.

As the procession approaches, the eye is struck by the multitude of people assembled around a tall pagoda, which is borne on the shoulders of many men by means of a frame resting on strong bamboos. This structure is chiefly composed of light wood,

cloth, and coloured paper, put together with great ingenuity, and adorned with streamers and gilding, which give it a splendid appearance. It is the shrine of an image, which has been formed of clay procured with great ceremony from the banks of some stream in the neighbourhood a few days before. Some of these structures have a small image representing a naked figure at each corner.

The bearers stop at certain intervals, during which there is no want of amusement for the spectators. Some of the attendants of this idol assume the most fantastic appearance, their tawny bodies being smeared or spotted with black or other colours, while they dance in the most grotesque manner, clattering sticks which they hold in each hand. Sometimes one personates a wild man, who is held by others with a chain or rope. Sometimes a man appears dressed as a woman, and dances, to the great amusement of the spectators. But the most interesting part of the pageant consists of men dancing and flourishing swords, or several couples engaged in combat with mock swords and small targets, in the use of which they display all that agility and rapidity of motion which seems a distinguishing quality of their countrymen.

While these performers are engaged in their dancing and other exercises, the whole assembled multitude continue a monotonous invocation, consisting of one or two words<sup>1</sup> addressed to the presiding deity,

<sup>1</sup> What an illustration of our Lord's warning,—“Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do!”

beating their breasts at the same time with their right hands. This is accompanied with the beating of tom-toms, and interrupted from time to time by the firing of guns and a loud shout, in which all join. The procession then moves on.

It has been painful to behold such idolatrous spectacles in a country which before presented so goodly an aspect, and to witness such a scene immediately in front of a Christian church, where they generally make a stop for some time, as if in defiance of the cross, the truth and purity of whose doctrines will eventually overcome and destroy all their superstitions. I have also seen crowds of young negroes following and joining in their invocatory cry and shout of applause, as loudly as the Hindoos themselves. Undue importance should not be attached to this circumstance, for the mass of the negroes have no friendship for the Coolies, whom they regard with jealousy as interlopers; but notwithstanding it may be considered as a sign of the times. Every one knows that the frequent sight of idolatry will tend to diminish the abhorrence which at first sight it occasions, unless the heart be very carefully guarded. These things have not been done in a corner, but openly practised and allowed. No wonder, then, that ill-disposed negroes, who have hated Christianity on account of its purity and the restraints which it has imposed upon their licentious desires, should have taken courage from what they saw around them to follow their own Obia practices instead. They could not see why they should be



restrained or blamed for doing so ; nor is there, indeed, anything in Asiatic superstition preferable to that of Africa.

Another Hindoo spectacle which may well excite our surprise in Guiana, though too common in India, is that of suspending their votaries by hooks fixed in their flesh, from one end of a long beam, which turns round by a pivot on an upright post, being moved by a rope fixed to the other end. This disgusting and demoralizing practice I have not myself witnessed, but have seen one of the hooks which had been thus made use of.

The following account was sent in April, 1850, by the schoolmaster of a district where this ceremony had not been previously performed. Speaking of the condition of the negroes, he says:—

“ The example of the idolatrous Hindoos brought among us cannot but be detrimental ; even while I am now writing the poor infatuated creatures are practising their abominable cruelties of suspending their votaries by hooks driven into their backs below the ribs, from a circular swing forty feet from the ground, keeping them constantly in a rotatory motion for about ten minutes, amidst shouting and beating of drums, and all this openly in front of (Plantation) Affiance, while hundreds of our creole population, neglecting work, are looking on and enjoying the horrid spectacle. This is no exaggerated picture, but their common practice.”

Much might be said on this subject, but its demoralizing tendency cannot be disputed, and needs no

comment. Our object is not to make out a case, but to state simple facts as they have occurred.

The Hindoos, when removed from their ancient temples, and the spiritual tyranny of the Brahmins, are much more favourably situated for receiving the truth than when in their own land. They are sharp and intelligent, and though they may be bigotted in favour of their own system of religion, or rather philosophy, yet their attachment to it is not insuperable when its absurdities and deficiencies are set before them.

I once went with a friend to see some Coolies who were engaged in building one of those movable pagodas before mentioned, in a small enclosure, which we asked permission to enter. This was peremptorily refused; and we were given to understand that the shrine would be polluted by our near approach. Of course we immediately gave up the point; but could not help begging the bystanders to turn from these follies, and serve the living and true God, who made heaven and earth. A Coolie from the crowd then stood forward, and said a great many things in ridicule of Christianity, and in praise of his own religion; pointing to one of our chapel schools, which was visible at some distance, as a building more absurd than their pagoda. Finding that we were getting unintelligible to each other, our antagonist, whose name was Ramlon Singh, desired us to follow him to the house of their interpreter, which we did. When taxed with the absurdity of worshipping an image which their own hands had made, he

maintained that God was in it. He took refuge from the charge of worshipping many gods in their favorite pantheism, saying, that God was in all things, wood, water, &c. When the cruelty of their superstitions was alluded to, he said but little ; and nothing at all in defence of the ancient custom of burning widows in India. When Juggernaut was mentioned, he seemed surprised, and asked how we could know of those things. He maintained that that image could do everything but speak ; and when asked if it could walk, he replied in the affirmative, but owned that he had never seen it do so. To the observation that his priests deceived him, he replied, that we had no better grounds for our belief than the Hindoos for theirs. I thought it best to speak of the atonement for sins, and asked if the absurd practices of his countrymen were able to satisfy the wrath of God. We had some difficulty in making him understand what sins were. At last he owned himself a sinner, and confessed his ignorance on this point. We then explained, as far as he was able to comprehend, the doctrine of the redemption of the world through Christ, and begged him and his friends to place themselves for instruction under the excellent and pious catechist then living on that estate.<sup>1</sup> He remained silent for some time, lost in thought, but said in conclusion, “ that if he became a Christian he could never go back to Bengal, where he had eleven brethren, who would all disown and persecute him.”

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Cave, sent out by the S.P.G. in 1840.

This was the only conversation I have ever had with these people, in which both parties were able to express their thoughts fully to each other; and for this we were indebted to the kindness of the interpreter.

These Coolies were only brought to Guiana for a few years, and then returned to their own country just as they began to acquire a knowledge of the English language sufficient to enable them to comprehend some of the simplest truths of Christianity. Fresh bodies of their heathen countrymen being brought from thence, all labour in such a case is hopeless, except by persons acquainted with their tongue, or by distributing the Scriptures and other Christian books in their language.

Though miserably poor in their own country, and of low caste, yet some of the Coolies are very intelligent men. I found one of these on Plantation Reliance. The negroes on that estate having struck for wages, had become very riotous on finding that they were to be deprived of their cottages unless they paid rent. On visiting them to endeavour to bring them to a better mind, I learned that an attempt had been made to set fire to the cottage of the Zemindar, or head of the gang of Coolie labourers there, for which a young negro was already in custody. On going to look at the spot, the Hindoo very courteously invited me to enter, and sit down. I did so, and was much pleased with the superior cleanliness of his apartment, which contained an odd mixture of European articles with those of Eastern

manufacture. His principal pride was however in his books. He showed me these, which were in three different eastern languages, one being Arabic ; and he had also an English spelling-book, a few easy sentences of which he read, to show his proficiency. When told that if he would attend our Sunday School we would teach him to read that and any English book, he closed with the offer, and came, attended with three or four more, the next Sabbath morning. I was soon after compelled to leave the country, and of course lost sight of him.

These things are mentioned, not as instances of good actually done, but merely as proofs that there is an open door for persons who shall be duly qualified to labour among them. To persons so qualified there is a field of great usefulness and promise laid open among the Hindoo and Mussulman labourers in British Guiana.

At the same time the benighted condition of the Coolie labourers has long called loudly for assistance. They are sunk in all the vices as well as follies of paganism ; one of the worst features of which seems to be indifference as to their own fate, and a want of compassion for the sufferings of each other.

It is grievous to behold the miserable objects which may be met with. Poor creatures afflicted with disease, which is increased by filth and vermin, and so attenuated and weak that they can hardly stand, may be constantly observed, wandering about in the most miserable condition. Sometimes they



may be seen sitting or lying beneath the trees by the side of the road, enveloped in a blanket, from which a meagre visage and bony arm are protruded, to beg for alms from the passers by. In this state they generally remain, with little sympathy from their own countrymen, until some of the police of the rural districts take charge of them.

They sometimes conceal themselves and die in the bushes, a little distance from the road. I once fell in with a man who was apparently in the last stage of a fever, lying in the long grass at the roadside. A negro girl had taken pity on him, and was supporting his head, and moistening his mouth with water, which she had procured in a calabash from a trench. Several people being in sight, I rode on and desired them to help the sufferer out of the hot sun into some place of shelter. Returning in the evening, I was surprised to find the man in the same spot, quite alone and speechless. Being seven miles from home, and knowing no one on the adjoining estates, I was at a loss how to act. After waiting some little time, three Coolies approached, and when they came up, I asked them to take charge of their fellow-countryman. To my great surprise, they flatly refused. One of them, a Zemindar, who spoke some English, said, that though they knew him, yet he did not belong to their gang, and that therefore they could not help him. At the question, "Will you leave him to die here in the road?" they shrugged their shoulders and laughed. When the anger of

God, and the probability of their soon being in a like condition was set before them, they looked more grave, but did not choose to seem to understand. Finally they left the unfortunate outcast. Before they had got far, I saw two stout negro lads on a bridge at some distance, and called to them, hoping to induce them, at least for hire, to take charge of him. Then his countrymen, seeing the negroes approach, did for shame that which they had refused to do from compassion—came back and offered their services. The Zemindar despatched the others to bring assistance, himself remaining with the dying man till it arrived.

A few days before, the body of a Coolie had been discovered in some low bush, a short distance from the same spot, half devoured by hogs or vultures. Let us hope that the gospel may speedily bring about a total change in the disposition of these people, causing them to cast away the apathetic indifference of Hindooism ; to care more for themselves, and to compassionate the sufferings of others.

The foregoing remarks are the result of personal observation during occasional visits to the coast or cultivated part of the colony, and of a comparatively short residence there at a recent period. It is in the power of those clergymen, whose ministry has been entirely in that part of the country, to supply much more copious and interesting information.

In taking a general view of the spiritual condition of the different portions of the population, we see



much reason for regret, but more for exertion. Various causes have checked the advancement of the negro. His position was most advantageous after the emancipation, and his progress cheering. It is impossible to acquit him of blame in allowing himself to be carried back, by yielding to the temptations that were in his way : at the same time we must never forget that evil example has been too often set before him, and that the darkness of heathenism has been poured in upon a country and people, that once promised to be "light in the Lord."

Our parishes presented the pleasing spectacle of a people advancing in Christianity. The introduction of the Coolies and others, though necessary for the temporal welfare of the colony, converted them into *Missionary Districts* : requiring labour of the most energetic and persevering kind.—Let us hope and pray that all that is evil and unpleasing in the foregoing sketch may soon pass away, by God's blessing on the land ; and be numbered among the things that have been. May the hour soon arrive, when the various discordant races of which the population is composed, shall feel the influence of that mighty Spirit, which, descending from above into their hearts, alone can lead them to the acknowledgment of one common Redeemer, and unite all in the faith once delivered to the Saints !

Whatever our present discouragements may be, we know from the sure word of prophecy, that the day must surely come, when every edifice which

African superstition and Eastern idolatry have raised there in opposition to the Church of Christ, shall crumble into dust before it ; when, according to the promise,

“ The Lord alone shall be exalted.

“ And the *idols* He shall utterly abolish.”

## CHAPTER II.

### THE INTERIOR AND ITS INHABITANTS.

Britain, God's chosen instrument in propagating the Gospel—Aboriginal inhabitants of America superseded in the public attention by the natives of Polynesia—Acquisition of three colonies in Guiana—Sketch of the Interior—A day in the Forest; its productions and scenery; Birds, Insects, Reptiles, and Quadrupeds—Indians: their persons, costume, food, habitations, canoes, and way of life described.—The Gospel the only civilizing power.

THE year 1851 marks the completion of a century and a half of the labours of England's oldest Missionary Society. The same year is remarkable for the great Industrial Exhibition in London. One of the medals designed as prizes on that occasion bears an appropriate design, representing Britannia seated to receive the productions of different nations, from the four quarters of the earth.

The idea is a pleasing one, and gratifying to the national pride of Englishmen. It is, however, still more delightful to consider our country in that most honourable position, in which the favour of God alone has placed her among the various tribes of the earth; as invested with power and opportunity to be

His instrument in bestowing the word of life, and planting his church in those heathen lands, which He has placed beneath her rule :—that the knowledge of Salvation in Christ may not be forgotten by her emigrant sons, and may be communicated to all the various Aboriginal tribes,—the children whom God has given her.

Among these various races, the natives of America had the first claim. They had been deprived of their country by the aggression of Europeans, among whom our own countrymen took their full share ; and it is but our just duty therefore to endeavour, by every means in our power, to save the last remnants of a perishing race.

The Indian, in his state of rude simplicity, has always been an object of curiosity to civilized man. The interest excited at the first discovery of America was immense. The accounts given by Columbus and his companions of the simplicity of the people, caused almost as much wonder as the discovery of their country. Their colour and appearance, their primitive manners, the unaffected kindness and hospitality with which the inhabitants of the larger West Indian Islands received and welcomed their ruthless destroyers, caused a sympathy for that unfortunate people which will endure as long as their story is remembered ; on the other hand, the ferocity of the inhabitants of the Caribi islands, and their cannibal propensities, excited equal wonder and disgust.

England had then little to do with either of these

· races, or with the inhabitants of tropical America generally. The people of Spain and Portugal had appropriated their persons, country, and wealth to themselves, and Rome claimed dominion over their souls.

Our colonies in North America brought us into collision with various tribes of Indians, men equally fierce, and far more robust and hardy than the most warlike tribes of the South. These were the first objects of attention to our Society, whose Missionaries continued to labour among them with great zeal until the separation of the United States from Great Britain in 1783. The only sphere of labour then left her among the Aborigines of America was Canada, Nova Scotia, and Hudson's Bay territory.

After this separation, the interest which had been felt by the public in general in the American Indians began to languish : and it was about the same time superseded by the great discoveries in the Pacific Ocean. The voyages of our great navigator, Captain Cook, and others, had revealed to us the existence of numerous islands of singular beauty and fertility ; and the interest excited by the descriptions of that great man, and those who followed him, almost equalled that felt by Europeans at the first discovery of the islands and continent of America. The Sandwich Islanders occupied in the public mind the place once filled by the painted warriors of the North ;—the more effeminate tribes of the South were superseded by the voluptuous natives of Tahiti and the Society islands ;—while the Cannibal Caribs, still in

existence, were forgotten in the interest taken in the equally cannibal New Zealanders.

This interest has been, by Divine direction, productive of much good to the inhabitants of Polynesia, at which all must rejoice. Pious and able men have exerted themselves with success in converting to Christianity the inhabitants of islands whose existence was hardly suspected a century ago. Even in that scene of spiritual darkness and desolation—in New Zealand—the labours of a Marsden, a Bishop Selwyn, and others, have been blessed by God to the establishment of the Christian Church.

But meanwhile, the events of the late war placed at the feet of Britain a country in South America, the aboriginal inhabitants of which have claims upon the Church inferior to none. The surrender of three extensive colonies in Guiana to us by the Dutch, has placed a large extent of country under our control for about half a century, and has of course given its inhabitants a claim upon us, equal to that which the natives of any of our colonial possessions have ever had. It is but lately that this claim has been at all attended to ; religious duties were but little regarded by the colonists in the time of slavery, and in England considerable ignorance prevailed respecting the colony altogether for many years. Even now we may find persons, who are tolerably well informed with respect to our East Indian possessions, Australia, and the South Sea Islands, who have scarcely any knowledge at all of British Guiana ; Demerara being sometimes inadvertently regarded as



a West Indian Island, instead of part of the continent of South America.

A brief sketch of the inhabitants, and present condition of the coast of that country, has already been given. We will now quit the cultivated district, and take a view of the interior and its inhabitants.

Though in so large a country considerable variety exists, yet forests and rivers may be said to form its most striking features. The woods commence at the very edge of the sea, and even in the sea trees may be seen covered with leaves. The courida bush prevails here, and the wild mangrove at the mouths of the rivers. From hence a forest of immense extent spreads over many thousands of square miles, broken in certain places by swamps, and in others by extensive savannahs, or open tracts only covered with grasses, and with clumps of trees here and there. The sand-hills and other ridges of moderate height are covered by these immense forests, which only give place to the rocky mountains of the far interior. These forests are in many places so dense as to be almost impenetrable, the spaces between the large trees being filled by smaller ones, all striving to find room for their branches, while the surface of the ground is covered with humbler vegetation, the luxuriance of which is unbounded. Magnificent timber trees abound everywhere ; the stately mora, which sometimes considerably exceeds one hundred feet in height ; the green heart ; the bully-tree, noted for its toughness and durability ; the bisi ; the simiri or locust-tree, with its bright yellow blossoms hanging



in beautiful festoons, or loaded with its sweet fruit : these and many others, which far exceed the forest-trees of Britain in height and size, meet the eye in every direction.

Numerous species of palms are also seen growing in clusters and mingling with the surrounding trees, or sometimes lifting their heads above them. These give great beauty and variety to the scenery of the woods. Among them are the cokarito, the stumps of whose decayed branches form a means of ascent, reaching from the root to the flourishing leaves at its top. This tree is remarkable for its hard splintery wood, of which the small poisoned arrows are made. There is also the trooly, whose leaves, from twelve to eighteen feet in length, are used in thatching houses ; and the elegant manicole, which rises to a considerable height, and whose stem is little more than nine inches in diameter. The cabbages at the top of this and other species are excellent food.

The difficulty of penetrating into these forests is increased by certain creepers and *bush-ropes*, as they are called, which ascend the trunks of the trees and then descend, binding and interlacing their branches in every direction. They are said even to destroy by their abundance the tree which supports them ; and it is not unfrequent to behold a tree half fallen to the earth, with its descent arrested for a time by being upheld by them.

As a constant summer prevails here, there is a continual renewal of buds and leaves, and very few living trees are ever seen bare of them. The surface

of the ground, where it is visible among the lower shrubs, is strewed with dead leaves, branches, and fallen trunks, in different stages of decay, some of which will crumble into dust beneath the foot which may be placed on them.

He who would see the beasts and birds which inhabit these forests, should rise from his hammock and ramble with the Indian at dawn of day. All nature then seems animated by the returning light. The panther, which hunts for its prey chiefly by night, has retired to its lair; and the red monkey or baboon is beginning to get tired of its own cry, the horrid noise of which must be heard to be duly appreciated. The birds and smaller animals come forth to feed, and every thing teems with life. Macaws, with their splendid plumage of blue and yellow, or crimson and purple, are flying over head amidst flocks of parrots, as numerous and noisy as rooks in England. The toucan, or bill-bird, so called from its enormous beak, may be seen in his favorite position at the top of the highest tree. The hannaqua and duraqua, the powis, as large as a turkey, and many others, remarkable for beauty or good for food, may then be heard or seen. Nor must the various and beautiful humming birds be overlooked.

Innumerable winged or creeping insects also meet the eye. The nests of the wood ants are fixed on the branches of some decaying tree. The coushi ants are stripping some favorite tree of its leaves, many being engaged in nipping them off above, whilst others below are busy in cutting them into

small pieces, which thousands bear away to their nests in the earth. The appearance of these portions of leaves, which seem at first sight to be erect and moving off of their own accord, is very singular, as they wind along their path in close succession, and climb over the little obstacles which lie in their way. Many other kinds of ants are also busy in every direction, while spiders abound, some of which are of very large size. Butterflies and other insects of great beauty are also very numerous at certain seasons of the year.

As the heat of the day advances, the birds retire to shelter until the approach of evening. The mournful note of the wood-pigeon may be heard in the distance ; but few birds quit their shelter during the sultry noon, except the pi-pi-yo, which disturbs the general stillness by its strong clear note, from the sound of which the Indian has taken its name.

When evening approaches, the busy scene of the morning is repeated ; the black and yellow mocking-birds become particularly loquacious, as they fly in and out of their pendent nests. The flocks of parrots retire to their places of rest, and a large winged insect comes forth at sunset, as if to give notice of the close of day, which it does by a loud, harsh noise, from which it is commonly called the *razor-grinder* by the settlers. After this all gradually subsides into the silence of night, broken only by the croaking of frogs, the occasional cry of nocturnal birds, and the slight sound produced by the vampire-bat in his eccentric flight.

Let the intruder into these forests be cautious where he treads, and lean not against a tree till he has well examined it. Otherwise he may receive a fatal bite from some venomous serpent. The tarantula spider, the centipede, and scorpion, are also there, and ants, whose bite is very painful, will begin to cover the clothes of a stranger before he is aware of their presence. The luxuriant and beautiful garb which nature here assumes, and which is so gratifying to the eye, is counterbalanced by dangers and annoyances, which, though they must not be magnified, are nevertheless of a serious nature. Musquitoes are very large and numerous near the coast, and for some miles in the interior of the country. But the serpents which abound in many places are chiefly to be dreaded. There are several of the constrictor species, some of enormous size, but they are not likely when unprovoked to attack a man, unless they are large enough to swallow him.

The bush-master, or konokosi, is the largest and most dreaded of all the venomous snakes. It is said to attack man even when unmolested. I cannot vouch for the truth of this; but it is always spoken of with dread. Fortunately, it is very rarely met with. Next to this the rattle-snake is most to be dreaded in dry situations, and the labaria in damp places; but there are many other species equally deadly. Snakes are, indeed, so numerous and so various, that the names of some of the species cannot even be learned from Indians themselves.

With all these reptiles, and indeed with most of the living creatures inhabiting the forest, the Indian wages continual war. Snakes, whether harmless or venomous, are destroyed wherever he meets with them; and the deadly powers which many species possess render their destruction absolutely necessary. No one who has seen the agonies of a human being, who has been bitten by them, can ever look upon a snake again without a feeling of disgust almost amounting to horror. The small gliding creature, contemptible in size, though beautiful in its variegated colours, which lies coiled among the roots of a tree, or hidden in the grass, is far more to be dreaded than the larger species, which destroy by their muscular strength, but have no poisonous properties.

It has been my lot to witness on more than one occasion the effects of the bite of the labaria, and there is perhaps no person who has lived for years in the interior who has not been in imminent danger at times from the proximity of some of these creatures. I have, however, only heard of one instance in which a full-grown man has been seized by one of the boa species. This occurred in the swamps of the Akawini. The reptile, a large camudi, sprang upon him, and coiled round his body, confining one of his arms. Providentially, before it could master the other, his wife, who was near, handed him a knife, with which he inflicted a deep cut, causing the snake to quit him, and make its retreat. The Indians, also, once told me of a large camudi having



been killed in a state of torpidity, which had just swallowed a boy of the Caribi nation.

To any one who knows what destructive creatures abound in these forests, it is surprising that accidents of this kind do not more frequently occur. But the great characteristic of the Indian is caution, and his keen eye and acute hearing are constantly exercised by the nature of his situation. He displays a subtilty of artifice in capturing these reptiles equal to that which is usually assigned to the serpent himself. I have seen an Indian creep under a low bush on his hands and knees, and capture a kolokonaro by means of a noose which he dropped over its head with a forked stick as it raised it to look at the intruder; the stick being then quickly placed on its neck, and the noose drawn tight, the reptile was hauled forth, and its capture completed. In this manner the Indians catch such snakes as they wish to preserve alive for sale. If the snake be not too large or venomous, the man grasps it tightly by the neck, and allows it to coil itself round his arm, until he is able to place it in secure confinement. The kolokonaro was only about five feet in length, but so thick and strong that the Indian who carried it was soon obliged to call for assistance, to remove the snake and release his arm from its pressure. This species is beautifully marked with brown, orange, white, and other colours. It is sometimes called the *land-camudi* or *boa*, to distinguish it from the other *camudi*, which takes to the water, and is found in damp places. They both attain to a great size.



Indian Snake-Catcher.





Some of the larger snakes are said to attain to upwards of thirty feet in length. I never saw any near that size : the largest that I knew of was about twenty feet, and was captured by some of our Indians in a similar manner to that related above, while gorged with food. They then tied it to the stern of a canoe, and towed it through the water to the residence of a settler, to whom they disposed of it alive.

Most of the animals which are found in these primæval forests are of species with which the greater number of our readers in England are little acquainted. The largest is the tapir or maipuri, called the *bush-cow* by the settlers, which is about the size of a large calf, and its flesh somewhat resembles beef. It is a clumsy-looking animal, with a tapering upper lip, feeding on the vegetable productions which abound in its favourite haunts, and harmless and retiring in its habits. There are many smaller animals which are hunted by the Indians, —several kinds of deer,—one of which, the wiribisiri, is remarkable for its elegance of form and its very diminutive size. The *bush-hogs*, as they are called, are rather numerous. There are two kinds most commonly met with, the aboeya and the kaero, the latter being large and ferocious. They have an orifice on the back, which is offensive, and is cut away by the hunters as soon as the animal is taken ; the other flesh is good. The acouri is a small animal, somewhat resembling a guinea-pig, but its legs are longer in proportion, and more slender ;

and it is much more active. Its colour is a reddish brown.

There is no animal whose flesh is more highly valued than the labba. This is of the size and shape of a small pig, though differing in its nose, feet, and some other parts of its body, which more resemble the hare. Being very delicious food, it is hunted without mercy. It always keeps near the water, and being amphibious, takes to it when pursued, and is generally killed there by the arrows of the Indians, who hunt it in two parties, one of which chases it with dogs to the stream, while the other, in a small canoe, follows the sound of the chase, and is ready to shoot when the terrified creature in the water approaches the surface to breathe.

The sloth may occasionally be seen moving among the branches of the trees ; and the armadillo, ant-eater, and coatimondi frequent certain districts, where their food is plentiful. Opossums are rather numerous : but there is no animal which gives more life to forest scenes than the monkey. There are several species of these. The red howling monkey is a disagreeable creature ; the greyish brown monkey is the most common ; and the diminutive sakuwinki the most beautiful. These inoffensive little creatures in the forests on the banks of the rivers, will keep company with a canoe for a long distance, whistling and chattering with the greatest animation to the paddlers ; while the woods resound with the crashing of the branches, as they spring, one after another, from tree to tree in their merry course. There is

another kind of monkey, with long shaggy hair, perfectly black, and very serious in his aspect, which may be seen occasionally taking a grave survey of an approaching party, till, suddenly, the necessity of taking care of himself seems to flash across his mind, and he makes a wild and undignified retreat. Other species may occasionally be met with.

The interest, and, in some degree, the danger, of a life in the woods, is kept up by the possibility of meeting with animals of the feline species. One kind of these, in the more distant parts of the interior, is black, but those more generally known are beautifully spotted. The jaguar, or South American panther, is the largest and most destructive.

In the deepest glades of the forest, or by the side of the streams which wind in every direction through the woods, these animals may be met with, though but rarely in districts where the Indian hunters are numerous. Although the jaguar is a beast of prey, it is impossible to gaze without admiration on his rich glossy skin, as the sunbeams fall on it through the opening in the tall trees caused by the stream. He will not, however, allow much time for examination of the deep black spots, disposed in rings on his tawny hide, as he generally retreats, after gazing for a few seconds at the intruding party; often looking round, as he glides off with noiseless step, and bounds carelessly, and apparently without the least effort, over the fallen trees and other obstacles which may impede his path. It is but very seldom that he allows such a view of himself in the daytime;

but at night his roar, or rather yell, is often heard, and his track is visible in the morning.

Although the jaguar rarely indeed attacks man, yet it is most certain that he *will* do so if hard pressed by hunger, or favoured by the darkness of the night. There is a winding in the river Arapiaco, called in the patois of the settlers "Tiger-hand," (or bend,) from the following circumstance. A solitary Indian being wearied with paddling, went ashore at this spot, tied his hammock under a tree, and slept. Whether he had been unable to kindle a fire; whether he was intoxicated (as too often happens), and forgot to do so; or, perhaps, had let his guardian-fire go out, is not known; but his half-devoured remains were found the next morning by a party who chanced to land there. This anecdote was related to me in 1841 by a respectable settler, Mr. P. Alstein, and corroborated by the Indians.

Sometimes the jaguar will be rather troublesome, even in the daytime. Not half a mile from our Mission, two settlers were cutting wood a short distance from their cottages, when a large "tiger," as they call it, approached them, and, notwithstanding their shouts to deter it, continued to advance resolutely till its proximity became very disagreeable. They then threw pieces of wood to drive it away; but as it was not to be thus repulsed, they, as a last resource, threw an axe, and ran into their cottage for a gun. The jaguar, probably expecting that they would be reinforced, then made off. They were hardy men, bred in the forests, but well knew that

if the irritated, and perhaps hungry animal made a spring, it would certainly bear down the object of its attack to the earth, and fasten on his throat. I have seen several skeletons of animals devoured by the jaguars, and generally found a small piece taken out of the skull, which is probably done by the stroke on the crown of the head which accompanies their powerful spring. The jaguar attains considerable size. Some of the skins of this larger kind which I have seen were five feet in length, not including the tail; but I once saw one from the Orinoco considerably longer.

The rivers of the country next claim attention. They are very numerous, British Guiana being well-watered everywhere. The largest is the Essequibo, which, including its windings, is more than six hundred miles in length, and receives the waters of several very large tributary streams. To the eastward of this are the Demerara, the Berbice, and the Corentyn, with several smaller streams. The main rivers take their rise in the mountains of the interior, near the equator, and form magnificent cataracts and rapids as they descend to the level of the sea. A number of islands beautify these large rivers, which are very broad at the mouth, the estuary of the Corentyn being ten miles across, and that of the Essequibo nearly twenty.

To the westward of the Essequibo are the Pomeroon, Moruca, Waini, Barima, and other rivers of various sizes which serve to drain the large tract of country lying between the cultivated part of the coast and



the delta of the Orinoco. This district may be described as an immense swamp, intersected by a few ridges of sand-hills, and abounding in lakes and what are called "wet savannahs." These are large open tracts of country, covered with reeds and rushes, and entirely overspread during the wet seasons with water, which drains off in dry weather. Some of these are studded with small islands, which are covered with stately trees; while clusters of the eta-palm grow in the swamp itself on spots of land somewhat higher than the rest. These, with their fan-like leaves and trunks which resemble stone columns, render very beautiful a scene which would otherwise be dreary and desolate.

Most of the lakes and streams abound with a great variety of fish. In the large rivers there are fish of more than two hundred pounds in weight, which the Indians shoot with arrows. Most of the smaller kinds are very delicious, as the Haimara, Pacu, Luganani, &c; others are rather dangerous to bathers, a small fish in particular, called Pirai, which I have known in two instances to have nearly severed the great toe of an Indian youth, who was standing carelessly in the water. To frighten these and other creatures, the Indians, when bathing, plunge and splash in the water, and make as much disturbance as they can.

A small alligator is found in the waters near the coast, which is eaten by the natives, and otters are numerous in many of the small rivers, and so pugnacious that they will sometimes follow a canoe, and



endeavour to bite the steering paddle. In the interior the cayman is found, which is a large and formidable creature, very dangerous to those who may have to swim across the rivers.

The rivers of British Guiana afford a means of communication with the interior. They are, in fact, the only means, as the dense forest which covers the country is only crossed, at present, by the foot-track of the Indian. In order to get at the various tribes, it is necessary to ascend these streams.

The Indian in his native forests appears very unlike the half stupefied being who might have been met wandering through the city, or on the plantations; and they would be much in the wrong who should form their estimate of him from his appearance when half intoxicated, and surrounded by a multitude of strange people and objects to which he has been little accustomed. He is then completely out of his element, and conscious that he is so; but when he returns to the forest, he at once loses his awkward manner; he is at home, and feels himself, in every quality necessary to a life in the wilderness, superior to the civilized stranger who may visit him, and who, endeavouring to make his way through some low tangled bush, or staggering across a swampy place on the insecure footing afforded by slender pieces of wood, must appear to the Indian even more awkward and out of place, than the Indian surrounded by the objects of civilized life did to him.

The appearance of the Indian in his natural state is not unpleasing, when the eye has become accus-

tomed to his scanty attire. He is smaller in size than either the European or the negro, nor does he possess the bodily strength of either of these. Few of his race exceed five feet five inches in height, and the greater number are much shorter. They are generally well made ; many are rather stout in proportion to their height, and it is very rare to see a deformed person among them.

Their colour is a copper tint, pleasing to the eye, and the skin, where constantly covered from the sun, is little darker than that of the natives of southern Europe. Their hair is straight and coarse, and continues perfectly black till an advanced period of life. The general expression of the face is pleasing, though it varies with the tribe and the disposition of each person. Their eyes are black and piercing, and generally slant upwards a little towards the temple, which would give an unpleasant expression to the face, were it not relieved by the sweet expression of the mouth. The forehead generally recedes, though in a lesser degree than in the African ; there is, however, much difference in this respect, and in some individuals it is well-formed and prominent.

The only dress which the Indian in his heathen state thinks at all necessary, is a single strip of cotton bound tightly round his loins, or secured by a cord tied round his waist. In this they generally wear a knife, (exactly similar to our carving knives,) which is of great service to them in clearing their way through the tangled briars and thickets, or as a weapon in case of emergency. A single string of

beads is worn round the neck, and sometimes a collar composed of the teeth of the peccary, or bush-hog, or other wild animals. Many individuals wear a small cord round the wrist and ancles. They make beautiful coronals, or tiaras, of the feathers of parrots, macaws, and other birds, set off with the brilliant breast of the toucan, but these, with many other ornaments, are seldom worn, except on festive occasions, or the days of their great dances.

The women of most of the tribes are as scantily attired as the men, but wear more ornaments. They have many necklaces of beads of different lengths, to which silver coins and crosses, the teeth of the jaguar and other beasts, and sometimes shells, are attached. These necklaces, with a very small apron of beads worked in a beautiful pattern, form the usual costume of an Indian girl.

Such was the appearance of both sexes in their natural heathen state, before the gentle influence of Christianity had opened the way for its handmaid civilization. Such is at this moment the appearance of many hundreds residing within sixty miles of the cultivated parts of the country, and of thousands in more remote districts. The females of the Arawâk tribe, however, and some few others, who had been rather civilized by intercourse with the wives of the settlers, often possessed a kind of petticoat, which they call *kimisa*, (from the Spanish *camisa*,) and suspended with a string over one shoulder, leaving bare the other. The men of this tribe have also generally a shirt, with sometimes a pair of trowsers,

and a cap or hat, which they put on when they expect to meet with civilized persons, and then lay up carefully in their pegalls or baskets, until a similar occasion calls for their use. But even this faint approach to the decencies of civilized life will totally disappear as the enterprising traveller may penetrate further into the wilds of the interior.

In selecting the site for his habitation, there are three or four things by which the Indian is guided. It must be near the water, that his wife or daughter may be able, with little trouble, to fetch it for the use of the family, and that he may be enabled to bring his small canoe to a spot convenient for lading it with his few household utensils, when setting out on one of their frequent migrations. It must be in the neighbourhood of a light sandy soil, where he can cut down part of the forest annually, to form the field for his cassava, and other vegetables. It must also be in a spot where game can be met with, and fish easily procured. Lastly, it must be in a place little frequented, for he is retiring in his habits, and will leave his quarters if too much disturbed.

When he has found a spot possessing these attractions he builds his house, and cuts down a large space of ground to form his field. This is generally done in the month of August, during the hot season; and the branches and foliage being soon dried by the heat of the sun, he sets it on fire, and the conflagration destroys everything except the charred and blackened trunks of the large trees. These he leaves on the ground;—*he* has worked hard to clear the

field, and the planting, weeding, and everything else connected with the cultivation of the cassava, and making it into bread, is left to the females of the family. While they attend to this and their household work, he occupies himself in hunting and fishing, spending a great deal of time in making baskets of various sizes and descriptions, and lying indolently in his hammock until necessitated to fish, or use the more violent exercise of the chase to provide meat for the wants of his family.

If a visitor to the dwelling of the Indian expects much in the way of architecture, he will be greatly disappointed ; a roof, thatched with the large leaves of the trooly or other kinds of palm, supported on a few posts and beams, being generally all that constitutes his dwelling. It is frequently open at the sides, but there is some variety in the shape ; sometimes one or more sides are enclosed with the same materials as the roof, and sometimes the roof itself slopes to the ground. Where there is but a single house there is generally a partition, which divides the apartment of the women and children from that appropriated to the men, it being one of the many marks of the degradation of the women that they must not eat with the male members of the family, though obliged to wait upon them.

The man's apartment, if it can be termed such, has a few low seats, sometimes carved out of single blocks of wood into the rude form of quadrupeds. From the beams are suspended hammocks, according to the number of persons who may be abiding there



for the time, which form their luxurious place of repose whether waking or sleeping. These hammocks are made of network of cotton, or the fibres of plants, and are not only convenient but necessary ; as a person sleeping in one of these is out of the way of most of the venomous creatures which infest the forests. Fires are lighted under these hammocks at night, which not only deter wild animals from approaching, but rarify the night air, and counteract, in a great degree, its excessive dampness. The apartment is also furnished with the implements used in hunting and fishing. Bows, five or six feet long, powerfully elastic, and made of polished wood, and arrows of neat manufacture, are to be seen, with fish-hooks and rods of various sizes. In the settlements near the coast there is a gun, if the man be at all industrious ; and among the more distant tribes of the interior the place of this is supplied by the long blow pipe, and the poisoned arrows which are discharged through it. The baskets called pegalls are generally formed of the outer skin of a large reed or cane, which is split into long strips, (half of which are painted black,) and then interwoven in various shapes and beautiful patterns. They are generally of an oblong square, with a lid that entirely covers the under part, and in them the Indian keeps his scanty wardrobe—a comb, a looking-glass, and other articles of European manufacture for his toilet, and sometimes an article intended for a very different purpose, being a small club with sharp corners, made of very hard and heavy wood, and capable of killing



an enemy by a single blow on the head. A supply of tobacco must not be forgotten : it is an article of which they are very fond, and which has with them an almost sacred character, from its use in their superstitious rites. They make cigars of the leaf, which they roll up in the inner bark of a tree.

The women's apartment, or kitchen, as it may be called, is furnished with a number of vessels for culinary purposes. Those of Indian manufacture are formed by themselves of a white kind of clay, and are baked and blackened over. They also make a sort of goglet, or long-necked vessel, for containing water ; but for the purpose of fetching it from the river they generally manage to procure one of our large stone bottles, which the women carry, as they do their other burdens, on their back, supporting its weight by a strap placed across the forehead. These are much stronger than their own brittle manufacture.

They have also a large grater, with which they scrape the cassava root into a pulpy mass, and a shallow trough to contain it when thus scraped ; the latter is generally part of some old canoe cut for the purpose. There is also a strainer, made of similar material to the pegall before described, but coarser ; it is a long tube open at the top and closed at the bottom, to which a strong loop is attached. The pulpy mass of cassava is placed in this, and it is suspended from a beam. One end of a large staff is then placed through the loop at the bottom ; the woman sits upon the centre of the staff, or attaches a heavy

stone to the end, and the weight stretches the elastic tube, which presses the cassava inside, causing the juice to flow through the interstices of the plaited material of which it is made. This liquor is carefully collected in a vessel placed beneath. It is a most deadly poison ;<sup>1</sup> but after being boiled it becomes perfectly wholesome, and is the nutritious sauce, called casareep, which forms a principal ingredient in the pepper-pot, a favourite dish of the country.

The apartment will also contain a circular iron plate, on which the cassava is spread and baked in broad thin cakes ; these form the bread of the Indian, and with Indian corn, different kinds of yams, potatoes, and other esculents, are a principal part of their food.

From the time of cutting down the forest to form the field, the labour of providing vegetable food is the work of the women, who are also expected to cut firewood, bear burdens when on the march, and perform the drudgery of the house.

The larger settlements or villages have generally a house superior in size and appearance to the others. Here the men meet to confer together on any matter which may demand public attention ; and strangers are received by them with ceremonious gravity.

It will be seen from the foregoing description, that many of their implements are made of iron. Before the introduction of this metal by the Europeans, the labour of both sexes must have been much greater

<sup>1</sup> Goats and pigs who have drunk it swell and die immediately, as I have witnessed.

than at present. I was once shown a small stone with a sharp edge, which they had found in the forest, and which they said was the head of a small axe used by their ancestors ; but it is difficult to conceive how they could ever have cut down a tree of large size with such a tool ; although we know that such implements are still used by many wild races at the present day. Probably fire was used to assist the labour of felling. They are now under obligations to us, which they gratefully acknowledge, for guns, axes, hoes, cutlasses, knives, and many other useful articles. They make the barbed heads of their arrows out of old cutlasses and other pieces of iron, and do it very well. Many of their arrows are still pointed with tough wood, hardened in the fire ; and they boast that such as these have been known to pierce through the body of a man, when discharged by a powerful arm.

They travel much, and principally by water. They sometimes make long journeys by land, carrying most of their effects with them ; but always go by water if possible, as their canoe then bears the burden, which they must otherwise carry themselves. Their light barks are made of a single tree, hollowed out and opened by manual labour, assisted by the action of fire ; they are generally pointed both at the prow and stern, and in that shape are called *corials* by the settlers, from a Caribisi word signifying a canoe.<sup>1</sup> Some of these are very large, and have

<sup>1</sup> I shall continue to use the latter word as best understood in England.

the pointed head and stern cut off ; and the opening thus caused is filled up by pieces of plank, on which are painted various fantastic figures in different colours, according to the taste of the owner. Sometimes a plank of a soft kind of wood is laced tightly on to the side to make it higher, and the seam is caulked. He who possesses one of these large canoes is a man of some importance among them.

They use paddles ; those made of the fluted projections of the lower part of the trunk of the yaruru tree are considered the best. They paddle with a regular stroke, but often vary the measure, for which the signal is given by the leader throwing the water high in the air from the blade of his paddle. They all sit facing the head of the canoe.

Having thus endeavoured to give, as briefly as possible, a general view of the external features of the country and its inhabitants, we shall next proceed to more particular information respecting the spiritual condition of these people, and the efforts made to enlighten the darkness of their minds, which were a perfect blank with respect to all that refines and elevates the soul. Though for a great number of years some of the tribes have been in proximity to Europeans of different races ;—first as bitter enemies, exterminating where they were able ; and afterwards as friends and allies, caressed and employed by the Dutch to hunt down their runaway slaves :—yet still, whether foes or friends to civilized man, scarcely any change was produced on their mode of life, or way of thinking. Instances are

related where young individuals of both sexes have been taken away and carefully educated : so that it seemed impossible they could ever again sink into their natural condition. The opportunity offered ; —the dark green forest was before their eyes,—the Indian was the Indian still,—and the unconquerable longing for the wild life of the woods has always been too strong in them for the restraints of education.

The present age is distinguished beyond those that have gone before it, by the efforts made to *evangelise* these people, whom it has been found impossible to civilize in any other way. The result has shown that the Gospel is the only effectual power,—that the heart of the savage can be softened and attracted only by the religion of Jesus.

“ They that dwell in the *wilderness* shall bow before Him.”

## CHAPTER III.

### MISSIONS TO THE INDIAN TRIBES.

Indian Superstitions—Opinions respecting Guiana—El Dorado—First Colonists—Their contests with the Indians—Afterwards use their help against the Maroon Negroes — The Moravians — Present Missions—Various Tribes—Fate of the Mission to the Macusis.

THE Indians of Guiana, in their natural condition, are slaves to superstition. There is a confused idea dwelling in their minds respecting the existence of one good Spirit, and they also believe in a multitude of inferior powers, generally of a malignant character.

The good Spirit they regard as their Creator, and their ideas of his nature are in many points surprisingly correct. As far as we could learn, he is regarded by them as immortal, omnipotent, and invisible ; they also acknowledge his omniscience : but, notwithstanding this, we have never discovered any traces of religious worship or adoration paid to him, among any of the tribes with which we have become acquainted. They seem to consider him as a being too high to notice them, and not knowing him as a God “that heareth prayer,” they concern themselves but little about him.



It is not, therefore, surprising that they should have the most abject dread of the evil principle, and not regarding God as their protector, seek blindly to propitiate devils. Superstitious fear thus reigns where holy love is wanting. Their belief in the power of demons is craftily fostered and encouraged by a class of men, who are their sorcerers or priests, pretending to hold intercourse with familiar spirits, and to cure diseases by their means.

Such a system of belief and practice, though it may not contribute to render them the more ready to receive Christianity when offered to them, yet opposes no very great obstacle to its reception. The devil-worshipper is ever found more ready to forsake his openly evil system, than the more philosophic heathen who is wise in his own conceit. Unhappily for the Indians of South America, for a long time none took the pains to endeavour to lead them to the knowledge of the true God, and the way of salvation through his Son.

Centuries elapsed from the discovery of Guiana, ere any effort was made to convert the Aboriginal inhabitants to Christianity. Not that it was a country overlooked and forgotten; on the contrary, it excited considerable attention. But the Europeans who first visited its shores, sailed up its rivers, or penetrated its deep forests, had one great purpose of a very different nature,—the all-absorbing thirst for gold had taken possession of their hearts.

Very different from the truth were the ideas which prevailed respecting the interior of Guiana, during

the sixteenth century, and even to a comparatively recent period. It was believed that in the heart of that country there was a golden region whose riches exceeded those of Peru. There was said to be a lake, called Parima, whose sands contained such quantities of gold, that the city of Manoa, on its banks, consisted of houses covered with plates of the precious metal; and not only were all the vessels in the palace of its emperor made of gold and silver, but gold dust was so abundant that the natives sprinkled it all over their bodies, which they first anointed with a glutinous substance that it might stick to them.

Men of other nations vied with the Spaniards in seeking these delusive regions. The fate of the expedition of the brave Sir Walter Raleigh is well known. It did not dispel these visionary ideas. Some of his men declared that they saw rocks shining with gold, and a mountain "containing diamonds and other valuable stones, the lustre of which was often seen to blaze at a considerable distance."<sup>1</sup> The acquisition of gold in other parts of America, by the Spaniards, seems to have inflamed the imagination of men on the subject to the highest pitch. Otherwise it is difficult to account for the report of the captain and crew of an English vessel, which soon after explored the Marowini; who declared that they saw on its banks "a gigantic race of men, who carried *bows* of gold;"<sup>2</sup> whether for ornament or use we are not informed.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Raleigh's Voyages.

<sup>2</sup> Drake's Voyages, p. 296.

Some of the adventurers, who from time to time set out on these wild expeditions, fell by the hands of the natives, others by famine and fatigue. Those who escaped seemed always to have been within a little of obtaining the object of their desires, although they always fell short of it. So late as the year 1770, the Governor of Spanish Guiana sent out an expedition, of which only one man returned to tell the fate of his comrades.<sup>1</sup>

From these deluded votaries of Mammon, whose fate forbids us to smile, nothing could have been expected in the way of propagating the Gospel.

When the Dutch first settled in the country, they adopted a surer way to wealth, by cultivating the fertile soil, which was not followed by the disappointment attending the seekers of El Dorado.

They, however, as well as the colonists from other countries, were fiercely attacked by the natives, among whom the Caribs were predominant, who destroyed their settlements; but afterwards they became on better terms with them, and as the Indians saw that they were satisfied with procuring slaves from Africa, and made no attempt to deprive them of their liberty, they ceased hostilities, and being gratified by the frequent distribution of presents, became of great service to the colonists, by hunting down such unfortunate negroes as fled to the woods for liberty. These efforts were always liberally rewarded.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh Journal, Pt. LXV.

<sup>2</sup> Though the Dutch colonists made no attack on the Indian tribes for the purpose of enslaving them, yet they encouraged the Indians in

It was not always the reward which instigated these cruel deeds, but oftentimes self-defence. The Maroon negroes, as they were called, knowing the dislike of the Indians, and their resentment against them as intruders into their territories, waged exterminating war when they had absconded in sufficient numbers, in order to make good their position. When a solitary negro ran away, he was reduced by hunger to the necessity of coming by night to the field of the Indian, and robbing it. As soon as the depredation was discovered, the poor wretch was tracked, if possible, to his lurking place, and either taken alive or put to death. Sometimes, however, the Indian took no notice, but waited till a clear moonlight night, when he placed himself upon a rude frame among the branches of a tree, and shot the unfortunate marauder as he would have done any wild beast.

While these deeds were encouraged and rewarded by the colonists themselves, it is quite evident that nothing could be attempted on their parts in the way of religious instruction of the Indians. The baleful effects of slavery extend to others as well as to the slaves.

the capture of each other, and purchased the slaves so taken. Such was the deplorable state of the colony at that time.

It is, however, certain that the system of enslaving each other did not then commence, but has existed among the Aborigines of Guiana from the earliest times. Francis Sparrow, a contemporary of Sir W. Raleigh, "bought, to the southward of the Orinoco, eight beautiful young women, the eldest not eighteen years of age, for a red-handled knife, the value of which at that time in England was but one halfpenny."—*Drake's Voyages*, p. 295.

Yet the Indians were not inaccessible even in those evil times to the power of the Gospel. This appeared from the success which attended the labours of the Moravians, the good effects of which are still perceptible. These devoted men laboured with the greatest zeal, and amid difficulties of no ordinary character, from 1738 to about the close of the century, in the Berbice and Corentyn.

The Rev. H. Redwar, who visited the latter river in 1839, heard an old blind man sing the long-cherished and well-remembered hymns which he had learned from the Moravians when a boy at their school. I have myself spoken with aged Indians who remembered the last Moravian Missionaries. After these missions were given up, the religious instruction of the Indians was totally neglected for many years ; and although, after the emancipation, their services were no longer required as allies against the negroes, and the annual presents made to them were discontinued, yet no public efforts were at that time made to impart Christian knowledge, and induce them to adopt civilized habits. They did not share with the negroes in that great privilege.

Fresh efforts for their conversion began on the Essequibo, at Bartica. This Mission was commenced in 1829, by Mr. Armstrong, who for four years bore alone the burden and heat of the day, the difficulties and trials which accompany the first introduction of the Gospel among heathen tribes. He dwelt in a thatched hut, and travelled from place to place among the people. After a time a rude chapel-



school was erected. This mission was continued by the labours of the Rev. Mr. Youd. Mr. Youd soon after undertook a mission to the Macusi tribe in the distant parts of the interior, the Rev. J. H. Bernau having taken charge of the mission in Bartica, in which he has since been assisted by the labours of Mr. Christian, and other excellent men. I visited this station in 1840, and was much gratified by what I saw there. It was then much improved, and a new chapel, &c. have since been erected.

A mission to the westward, in the river Pomeroon, was resolved on in 1839, and commenced in the following year. 1840 was also remarkable as the year in which the Rev. W. Austin commenced his work among the Indians of Ituribisi, and for the foundation of a mission station at Waraputa on the Essequibo by Mr. Youd, who had been expelled by Brazilian interference from the Macusi mission at Pirara.

In the year 1844 two new missions were undertaken, the one at Waramuri, near the Pomeroon, and the other on the river Mahaiconi, to the eastward of the Demerara. Other efforts were also made to extend and carry out the work, particularly among the Indians of Capoue.

The stations commenced by Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Youd have been supported by the praiseworthy efforts of the Church Missionary Society. A full account of them, and a sketch of the labours of the Moravians during the last century, was published in 1847, by the senior missionary at Bartica, which leaves nothing to desire on either of these points.



No account having been given of the other existing missions which are enumerated above, and which (with the exception of the work at Ituribisi) are supported by the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, it has seemed not only desirable but necessary to bring this large field of labour before the Christian public.

The first and grand difficulty in the way of the Missionary is the number of distinct tribes, and their various languages. This meets us at the threshold of our work. One who has had a better opportunity than any other of examining the country thus writes:—"The number of vocabularies which I collected during my voyages was eighteen, none of which bear a closer affinity to each other than the French and Italian."<sup>1</sup>

Several of these may have been collected beyond the British frontier, but from this statement will appear the excessive difficulty of preaching the Gospel to so many different nations, the most numerous of which only consists of a few thousand individuals. Our missionaries seem to need, not only the graces of the Holy Spirit, but a portion of those wondrous gifts which were bestowed on their predecessors at the day of Pentecost.

This difference of language is a most remarkable fact in the history of the American continent, and has forcibly impressed the minds of many learned men. One of the most striking instances of it is seen immediately on quitting the coast of Guiana.

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Schomburgk.

Three of the tribes, the Arawâk, Warau, and Caribi, may be found residing close together, and they have done so for at least three centuries; and yet no intermixture seems to have taken place in their respective languages. They are of decidedly different origin, and remain distinct.

These three tribes, with the Wacawoios, have been the principal objects of missionary labour.

The first of these, the Arawâk, is the most numerous, and the least barbarous of all the tribes near the coast. Their settlements are scattered in an extended line within a hundred miles of the sea, from the Orinoco to the Marowini. Their ideas of spiritual things are those expressed in the beginning of this chapter. The names, or rather titles, by which they designate the Supreme Being are beautifully simple. They call him Wacinaci (our Father), Wamurreti-kwonci (our Maker), and Aiomun Kondi (the Dweller on high). Their sorcerers are called Semicici, and the evil principle Yauhahu.

The Warau tribe comes next. Their settlements are very numerous along the swampy coast district extending from Pomeroon to the Orinoco, the delta of which seems to be their head-quarters; and a few may be found as far east as Surinam. They possess some good qualities, but are dirty and improvident. They sometimes use the name Kororomana when speaking of God, but it is dubious what ideas some of them attach to that name. The evil spirit they call Hebo.

The Caribi tribe, famous in history, and regarded

with awe by the others even now when verging to extinction, is the next met with. Their settlements are more inland than either of the former tribes, but so irregularly located that no correct idea can be formed except by the assistance of a map. In general they are found at some little distance from those of the Arawâks, with whom they were often at war in former times. Their numbers have been variously estimated at 300, 500, and even so low as 100. Nothing is more difficult than to number these scattered and wandering tribes, which are more numerous than is generally supposed. We have in the neighbourhood of our missions to the westward nearly 400 of this tribe, whose existence seems to have been unknown to those who estimated their number as above. They have, however, rapidly diminished during the last century, chiefly by epidemic diseases, and will probably be extinct in British Guiana ere many years have elapsed, unless the efforts made for their conversion be conducive to their temporal welfare likewise, which by the divine blessing may be the case. They call the Great Father, Tamosi, and the evil spirit, Yourika.

The Wacawoios are the most wandering in their habits of all the tribes. Their language seems to be a dialect of the Caribisi, as individuals of the two tribes understand each other without much difficulty.

This preliminary sketch seemed necessary to impart to the English reader some general idea of the nature of our work. A more particular account

will be given, as each tribe passes under our notice in the course of the following narrative.

There is, however, one tribe yet unnoticed, of considerable importance. This is the Macusi, which occupies the open savannahs in the distant interior. Schomburgk estimates the total number of this tribe at about 3,000. The site of the mission which was undertaken by the Rev. Mr. Youd to these people was first fixed at Pirara, in the neighbourhood of which is a small lake called Amucu, which is supposed, from the geological structure of the adjoining country, to have been much larger formerly than it is at present. It is supposed to have given origin to the fable of the lake Parima, and El Dorado.<sup>1</sup> This, which may in a measure be regarded as classic ground, was the spot first selected for a mission to the Macusis. Its fate is thus recorded by the learned traveller above mentioned. Speaking of Mr. Youd, he says :—

“The Indians soon collected around him, and evinced the greatest anxiety to be instructed in the word of God, and our language. I have seen from three to four hundred Indians on a sabbath, dressed according to their circumstances, and in an orderly manner, assembled within a rude house of prayer

<sup>1</sup> Humboldt says :—“Here, in a river called Parima, and a small lake connected with it called Amucu, we have basis enough on which to found the belief of the great lake bearing the name of the former ; and in the islets and rocks of mica-slate and talc which rise up within and around the latter, reflecting from their shining surfaces the rays of an ardent sun, we have materials out of which to form that gorgeous capital whose temples and houses were overlaid with plates of beaten gold.”

built by their own hands, to receive instruction in the holy word of God. The mission was not established many months, when the Brazilian government of the upper and lower Amazon despatched a detachment of militia, and took possession of the mission, under the plea that the village belonged to the Brazilian territory. The missionary of the church of England was accused of having alienated the Indians from the Brazilian government, and instructed them in the English language and religion, and received an injunction to leave the village. The Indians, fearing lest the Brazilians might conduct them into slavery, dispersed in the forest and in the mountains, and the work which promised such favourable results was destroyed.”<sup>1</sup> It was found necessary, by our government, to send a military expedition to recover possession of Pirara.

Driven from Pirara, Mr. Youd attempted a second mission at Waraputa, as before related, but this, though ably conducted, first by himself, and afterwards by his successor, the Rev. Mr. Pollitt,<sup>2</sup> never gave prospect of so plentiful a harvest of souls as the former. At Georgetown, in 1840, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Youd, who had just arrived there after his expulsion from the scene of his promising labours. He was accompanied by a great number of Indians, who were resolved to share his fortunes, and it was delightful to see the reverential obedience which these wild looking people paid to

<sup>1</sup> Description of British Guiana, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Now S. P. G. Missionary at Burra Burra, in South Australia.



him. Most of these were Macusis, but there were also some of the Caribi tribe, among whom was Irai, the chief of that tribe on the Essequibo, a descendant of Mahanarva, a chief of great note in the beginning of the present century. This young man was distinguished from the others, who went in procession with Mr. Youd to wait on the governor, by a large crescent of gold set in a frame of polished wood, which he wore on his bosom.

The mission to Pirara was by far the brightest attempt which has yet been made, in the way of missionary enterprise, in Guiana. It was, perhaps, unadvisable to go as far as the disputed boundary to establish a mission, yet the event could not have been foreseen, and the prospect of the great good to be wrought justified the attempt. For who can estimate the bearing of a prosperous mission in the centre of Guiana on the work at large? Its effects would not have been confined to the Macusis alone, but would have gradually extended themselves among more distant and barbarous tribes; while, in the other direction, its reflected influence would have aided that which emanated from the missions near the coast.

It is, indeed, difficult to combine the wisdom necessary for these undertakings, with that zeal which it is incumbent on all to feel, who would obey the great command, "Go ye and teach all nations."

When it is considered that the distance of Pirara from Georgetown is probably not less than three hundred miles, and that the river is interrupted by



cataracts and numerous rapids, which, with the strong current, render the labour of ascending it very great, and of some weeks' duration, a just estimate may be formed of the zeal of this indefatigable missionary; who, in the attempt, lost his family by sickness, and, eventually, his own life. Worn out with trials, privations, and sickness, he has long since gone to his rest, (having died at sea,) but his example remains for others to follow. He has shewn, what might otherwise have been doubted, that the Indians who are too remote to feel the slightest influence of civilization, are accessible to that of the Gospel of Christ.

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INDIAN MISSION ON THE POMEROON.

Situation—Causes which led to the foundation of the Mission—First residence of the Missionary—Unsuccessful efforts among the Waraus and Arawaks—First converts—Visit to the Chief and settlements of the Arawaks—Its results—Sickness of the Missionary—Progress of the Gospel.

CONSIDERABLY to the westward of the cultivated part of the coast of Essequibo, is a spot which is marked on most maps as Cape Nassau. It is at the mouth of the river Pomeroon, and on its eastern bank. Adjoining this is a small estuary, or rather bay, into which flows the river Moruca, from a different direction ; which drains a large tract of country still further to the westward.

The Pomeroon, or Bouruma, (as it is called by the Indians,) is of small size when compared with some other rivers in the colony. Its source is probably in the Sierra Imataca, which is a mountainous ridge stretching from the Essequibo to the Orinoco, and gives rise to many large streams.

The Dutch formed their earliest settlement, which they called Nieuw Zealand, near the Pomeroon, as early as 1580 ; and in the course of the following century erected towns on its banks, and on those of the

Moruca. These have long since perished. The only remains of their settlements are the bricks, which may be found in some places embedded in the earth.

The Indians again resumed the possession of their lands, and with the exception of a very few settlers, form their sole occupants at the present day. Pomeroon is inhabited by the Arawâk and Caribi tribes, who are also found on the tributaries of the Moruca; but the latter stream may be properly said to be in the country of the Waraus, who are there found in great numbers. In the whole district, the Indians are probably more numerous than in any other part of the colony.

Nothing had been attempted in the way of Missionary enterprise among them, previously to the visit of Bishop Coleridge; who, accompanied by Archdeacon Austin, (the present Bishop of Guiana,) went through that part of the country in 1839. The plan of the mission originated, (I believe,) with the late Rev. J. H. Duke, who had become acquainted with the numbers and condition of the Indians in the course of his pastoral visits to the settlers on the banks of the river.

The representations of the Bishop to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, were responded to by the immediate appointment of two Missionaries; one in holy orders, the other a lay assistant, who were sent out with directions to proceed to the Pomeroon as soon as possible, and endeavour to establish a Mission there.

The appointment of two persons to commence a

work of this kind is most desirable, and in accordance with the example set by our Lord himself. They form a support in mutual labour, and a safeguard to each other against many spiritual dangers. A chain of circumstances, in the present instance, however, prevented this excellent arrangement from being carried out. The Rev. C. Carter was unavoidably prevented from going to the proposed mission, and the office of commencing it devolved upon myself. As I was till 1850 the sole missionary in the upper part of the Pomeroon, the history of this mission must of necessity be given in the form of a personal narrative. Though a task of delicacy, this is perhaps the best, as it is the only way. A better idea is thereby conveyed of the various scenes of Indian life, and of the hopes, disappointments, encouragements, trials, and vicissitudes, which befall those who engage in the awfully responsible, yet deeply interesting work, of extending the kingdom of the Redeemer in heathen lands.

The site selected for the mission was at the junction of the Pomeroon with its tributary the Arapiaco, about forty-three miles from the mouth of the former. It was well chosen; as all the canoes from the upper and lower parts of the river must pass by the spot, on their way to the cultivated part of the coast of Essequibo; with which there is a communication by a chain of smaller streams, and the Tapacuma lake.

On the banks of the Arapiaco, just above the confluence of the rivers, which there form a fine sheet

of water, there is a small strip of land, which had been cleared, and was formerly inhabited by a gang of negroes employed in cutting wood. These negroes, at the expiration of the apprenticeship, had taken the earliest opportunity of quitting the rivers for the society of their gayer brethren on the coast. There were still standing, in the beginning of 1840, three cottages or huts which had been occupied by them.

There was also a wooden building, which had been used as a place of worship, when the settlers of the district were visited by a clergyman, or an itinerant catechist, who had frequently performed divine service there. - It was, when I first saw it, in a most wretched state ; the thatched roof being full of large holes, and several of the window shutters having fallen off. There was free access to the wind and rain. Not having been used for a long time, it was almost inaccessible from the long grass and weeds which grew all round in rank luxuriance. The frame of the building was, however, quite sound, though the boarded sides and floor were much decayed. This was to be the future mission chapel.

Though the Indians themselves live in a rude and primitive way, yet they form their estimate of a white man, in a great degree, from the appearance of his abode, and the comforts which surround him. A great obstruction to the establishment of the mission arose from the situation and nature of my first dwelling-place, which it is necessary briefly to describe.

One of the three huts before mentioned was occupied by an old white sail-maker, who was sick with ague and fever, and soon after left the place. The next was the dwelling of an old negro woman, named Jeannette, who had several black children residing with her. The third was at my service. It was a singular and not very inviting residence : the front was boarded and covered with shingles (or wooden tiles); the two ends were of shingles nailed upon laths, and the back was composed of the split trunks of the manicole palms, covered on the outside with the leaves of the trooly. The roof was also thatched, but the thatch was full of holes. It was divided by partitions of rough boards into three apartments, two of which had boarded floors resting on the earth, and very much decayed ; and the third had apparently been used for some light kinds of blacksmith's work, a block of very tough wood standing firmly fixed in the earthen floor, which had been used as an anvil. The situation of the building being low, the water appeared between the chinks of the old floor, when the river was swollen by the spring tides, and a number of small frogs were accustomed to come out in wet weather, and spring upon the walls ; one part of which being very damp and green, seemed to possess particular attractions for them. The roof was open, and flakes of mingled soot and cobwebs, which had been long collecting there, were continually falling, as the insects which abounded disturbed and shook them down. There was, also, a large nest of wood-



ants, which were devouring different parts of the building. These were destroyed by a dose of arsenic, furnished by a respectable settler in the neighbourhood, who also kindly sent a man to whitewash the inside of the walls, which were in a filthy condition, and abounded with vermin.

To this wild spot I was welcomed by the old negro woman, who engaged in my service with the greatest willingness; and, indeed, without her help it would have been impossible to have remained there. She had a black lad living with her, about eleven years old, whom I got to sling his hammock with me in my new abode, not thinking it quite safe to sleep there alone. The first night we were disturbed by some creature getting in at a hole in the roof, which my companion said was a tiger-cat. I was more apprehensive of snakes, which abounded there; but we had no opportunity of ascertaining the nature of our unwelcome visitor, as it was perfectly dark; and being alarmed at the noise we made, it effected a hasty retreat, and returned no more.

Having no furniture, it became necessary to borrow some for present use. This was difficult. However, a table with three legs was procured, and the place of a fourth supplied with a stick from a neighbouring tree. It was, after all, so rickety that it could only stand against the wall. A small wooden chair was also obtained, the seat of which being lower in front than behind, the person sitting in it had a tendency to slip off. It was quite a curiosity in its way, and why it was made so it was difficult to conceive. A

small bench or form supplied a more convenient seat. In other respects we managed somewhat better, being supplied from a wood-cutting establishment, where there was a small store, or shop, from whence rice, plantains, salt-fish, and pork might be procured, which formed almost my only diet for several months. This, with the damp situation, was injurious to health, though other inconveniences were trifling, and it was impossible to refrain from smiling at the grotesque appearance of the dwelling and its contents.

The rivers being in front, and a swampy forest behind us, we were obliged to go by water whenever we wished to leave the place, and a canoe was lent me for two or three months, till an opportunity presented itself of purchasing one.

Divine service was commenced on the Sunday in the decayed chapel before mentioned; but it was very thinly attended. The former congregation of negroes was almost gone, and very few settlers ever came.

A school was then commenced with two or three black and coloured children, whose parents could be induced to send them. The task of instructing negro children is by no means a pleasant one, at least at the commencement. Their parents, who wish to bring up their children according to their ideas of what is right, trust entirely to severity, and use the lash unsparingly. Nor did those among whom I was thrown hesitate to use certain kinds of torture. A black girl having been guilty of a trifling

theft, her mother roasted a lime, or small kind of lemon, and forced her to grasp it in her hands, which she held tightly compressed within her own, till the palms were severely burnt. At times the girl had to hold up a brick, till, being exhausted, she let it drop. On another occasion I found on the opposite bank of the river three women chastising a girl. They had stripped her, and two held her extended by the hands and feet, while the third flogged her. In every such case further punishment was remitted on my intercession ; but they always said,—“ Ah, Sir ; you do not know us negroes ! If black children are not well flogged they never do good.”

The young negroes, in consequence, certainly treat their parents and elders with much outward respect ; but they are vicious and little to be trusted, as may be supposed from the training they have received. They seem to feel great delight in seeing each other punished, and in holding the culprit while the chastisement is inflicted, even if their own turn is to come next.

The great object in view being the conversion of the Indian tribes, some Waraus, who were employed in cutting trooly leaves in the neighbourhood, became the next objects of attention. In order to visit them, it was necessary for me to paddle myself across the river every evening, assisted by the negro boy. I found them a very wild party, both in their appearance and manners. It was, indeed, hardly possible to look at their degraded condition, especially that of the females, without deep commiseration,

and an earnest prayer that they might soon feel the blessed influences of the gospel, and be led to sit *clothed* at the feet of the Lord Jesus. An elderly man named Manwaiko was their capitan, or chief. He was as ignorant of our language as any of his people. I endeavoured to enter into conversation with him, but everything connected with religion was distasteful, and he invariably answered in the jargon of the rivers, "me no sabby" (*I do not understand.*) When he spoke to me, I was equally at a loss to comprehend his meaning.

Hoping to get on by degrees, I asked him the names of different objects in his language, and wrote them down to commit to memory. This at once interested him ; and it is indeed a passport to the favour of every Indian, to express an interest in his language. We were soon on friendly terms, and his people, as well as himself, began to look for my arrival every evening after they had done work. They could not, however, be induced to visit me, or to attend Divine service on the Sunday. They said they had no clothes, which was indeed true.

On one Sunday morning, a black man brought five Waraus to the chapel. They were mostly dressed in red woollen shirts, and some of them had on their heads high-peaked caps, a natural production of the trooly tree. They had no trowsers, shoes, nor any other apparel. They seemed divided between a consciousness of unusual finery, and a nervous apprehension of the supernatural consequences of attending our worship ; but every other feeling seemed lost in

mirth, when one of them, wishing to kneel, lost his balance, and nearly overturned one or two of the others. Their behaviour after this was so irreverent, that it was a relief when they left our humble place of worship. These incidents, though painfully annoying, must be expected at first, among barbarous and heathen people.

All efforts among the Waraus seemed perfectly fruitless, as far as regarded their spiritual welfare. I thought that a faint glimmering ray of truth began to break in upon the darkness of their minds at last, but they left the neighbourhood in two months time, the period for which they had engaged to work having expired.

Manwaiko had two wives, and each of these had a family of young children. His eldest daughter was a girl of about ten years of age, and a fine young man of the party was pointed out to me as her husband; the Indian girls being betrothed at a very early age. Between the two wives and their respective children, little kindness seemed to exist. One evening, shortly before their departure, while the whole party were squatting on the ground, eating their supper, which consisted of salt-fish and pounded plantains, called "foo-foo," being the rations provided by their employer, one of the wives, who with her children had been employed in cutting firewood, discovered, on her return, that the supper for herself and family was not to be found, having been carried off by some animal through the neglect or connivance of her rival. It could hardly be expected that she

would sit down quietly without the evening meal for her children, even if disposed to submit as regarded herself; and she accordingly applied to Man-waiko for a share of his allowance, which was rather ample. He treated her request with great contempt, and hardly vouchsafed her a denial. She then commenced a furious torrent of abuse; during which he finished his meal with great composure; until, being irritated at his indifference, she at last told him that he was no "capitan," no father, and no man. He was rather roused by this last remark, and in a stern hoarse voice said something which seemed to silence her, but I do not know whether any additional allowance was procured; and finding it impossible to do any good I left them.

I never have seen such a stormy ebullition of temper among the other tribes, and think it is rare in the Indian families; though, where polygamy is practised, there continual variance and ill-feeling are to be found.

Before this party went away, the old chief, calling one of his men, desired him to bring me a paper in his possession. This I found to be a certificate signed by a priest of the Church of Rome, stating that he, on such a date, "baptized Christopher, a Warau." On my making enquiries, they gave me to understand that the man, who was called Kobus, and some others, had received directions from one of their head men to go to the priest, and receive each a paper, to which baptism was the preliminary. I could not find, (though I should have been most



glad to have done so) that poor Kobus knew anything of our Lord Jesus Christ, or even that there was a Saviour existing. When I told him that his name was no longer Kobus, but Christopher, he laughed; repeated "Kistoba" several times, to commit it to memory; and with his comrades seemed excessively amused with the idea. I have no doubt but he is reckoned among the converts of the Church of Rome,—an easy conversion: where there was not even a knowledge of his Christian name.

There are no Warau settlements in the Pomeroon. I did not know this at first; but seeing that there were many of that tribe employed near me, thought that their dwellings were not far off. However, that party lived more than one hundred and fifty miles away, and were brought from that distance by the settlers, as their work is cheaper and more profitable than that of the tribes inhabiting the river.

These efforts with the Waraus having proved ineffectual, as far as human eye could see, and the only result being the acquisition of a very small vocabulary of their language, which proved useful in after times, I found that the only prospect of establishing a mission was among the people of the river. We were in the country of the Arawâks, and I had already had frequent interviews with them in their canoes on the river, but now resolved to devote my humble efforts exclusively to their benefit,—at least for the present.

The external appearance of the Arawâks is very superior to that of the Waraus;—not that they are

superior in size and strength, but they have a more civilized appearance and manner, and greater cleanliness of person. The women seldom appeared on the river without putting on the "kimisa;" and their hair, which is thick and long, was generally neatly braided, and, in some instances, secured by ornaments of silver at the back of the head. Some individuals were remarkable for beauty of face and form, and most of them were less squalid in figure, and possessed finer and more intelligent features than the females of the other tribes. The men of this tribe generally wore a shirt at least, with sometimes a covering for the head.

Many of the younger men knew the broken English spoken on the rivers, and with them I was able to converse, though with the greatest difficulty on religious subjects, which appeared, even when expressed in the plainest manner, to mystify them exceedingly. The older men used the Creole-Dutch in their intercourse with the settlers, and with this I was unacquainted. The females spoke nothing but their own beautiful language; although some individuals knew enough of ours to comprehend the meaning of a few sentences expressed in the simplest form.

I frequently fell in with them on the river, but was sorry to find that the message of salvation met with no better reception. They possessed a natural courtesy, which prevented them from reviling or insult; but it was very evident that they looked on the missionary as a troublesome person.

They never would visit my abode, though often invited to do so ; and when they called at the cottage of the old negro woman, they took their leave when they perceived me approaching to speak to them. By commencing a school for the five or six black and mulatto children in the neighbourhood, I had hoped to attract the Indians also ; but the antipathy of their race to the negroes rendered it anything but an attraction to them. One Indian alone promised to send me his son, and he broke his word.

To push off in my canoe, and stop them as they were passing, was the only means of intercourse left ; and it was soon mortifying to see them paddle quickly by with as little noise as possible, keeping on the opposite side to escape observation. One man, more plain in his speech than the rest, expressed the general sentiment of his tribe (and, I may add, of the Indians generally) in words to the following effect, being an answer to my request that he would listen to the Word of God :—" My father knew not your book, and my grandfather knew not your book ; they understood more than we ; we do not wish to learn what they did not know." This indifference was very painful, but the man spoke the truth boldly, and I appreciated his candour, though grieved at their obstinate resolution to remain in blindness.

These people respect no one until he becomes a " habeci," or *elder* ; consequently, a very young man labours, humanly speaking, under great disadvantages among them. They would have listened more

readily to the words of a person in holy orders, though only on account of his superior years. But the greatest cause of their unwillingness arose from the fact, which I afterwards discovered,—that the “semi-cici,” or sorcerers, foreseeing the loss of their gains and influence, if the Gospel were received, had forbidden the people to hold intercourse with me, denouncing sickness and death against them if they did so.

Some time had now elapsed since I first commenced the work among them ; and I felt the premonitory symptoms of sickness. The Rev. Mr. Duke had given orders to a settler for the erection of the mission cottage about eight months before ; and the posts and roof had been put up, but no further steps as yet taken to finish it. The situation was low, and the ground flooded by the rains and high tides ; one morning, indeed, the canoe was found to have floated into the forest at the back of the houses, during the night. The discomforts of this wild and solitary situation were small things, however, compared with the total failure of the efforts for the conversion of the heathen. It was, indeed, wrong to despond, but difficult, at times, to avoid it. “ Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

One day, about noon, I was surprised by a visit from an Indian, who was accompanied by his son, a little boy about five years of age ; and I was still more surprised when, after a friendly salutation on his part, he asked me if I would instruct his child. I had never seen the man before, and could hardly

believe him serious in his request. He was, however, perfectly in earnest, and said that he had just returned to his "place," after a long absence, and had now come to see me as soon as he heard of my arrival among his people. He was not so well acquainted with English as some of the younger men, but we managed to understand each other's meaning, helping out the words by signs and gestures ; and an hour or two passed away more pleasantly than any I had experienced for a long time. He had been to the mouth of the Essequibo, and had seen what was doing there.

I endeavoured to ascertain the state of his mind, and he answered my inquiries, as far as he was able, with much frankness. He seemed to have his eyes open to the state of the Indians, as living "without God in the world," and expressed disgust at the superstition of his countrymen in serving devils. Some time afterwards I found out that he had been himself a sorcerer, but becoming disgusted with the practice, had broken his magical gourd, and cast away the fragments, previously to his placing himself under instruction. He did not tell me of this at first, probably fearing that I should reject his application, not being aware, as yet, that past sins are no bar, but rather a reason why we should flee unto Christ for salvation.

He had been a great traveller for one of his tribe, having been a long way up the Essequibo, and he was also well acquainted with the lower part of the Orinoco. Though no recognised chief, he was the

principal man at his settlement, and possessed of rather extensive family influence among his people. He was small in stature, and consequently rather mean in his appearance, but possessed keen eyes, and his black hair was more than usually inclined to curl : from this he had derived his Indian name, which he told me was "Saci-barra," (*good or beautiful hair.*)

Though fully believing in the existence of God, and desirous of serving him, he seemed to have no idea of the only Mediator between God and man, and was lost when I spoke of the Redeemer. He seemed, however, to be firmly convinced of the impossibility of knowing the way to the "*great our Father,*" without revelation from God himself, and promised to come every Saturday, and stay till Monday morning, that he might see his child, and himself receive instruction.

I would willingly have kept the boy with me, but he said he was not prepared as yet to leave him, and seemed hurt at the distrust implied. He said *his words were true*, and I had, a day or two after, proof that they were so, by his bringing not only the boy, but his eldest daughter, a girl eight years of age, whom he placed with me, assuring me that all his children should be brought as soon as they were old enough.

After some further conversation he returned to his canoe, went home, and induced his wife to come with him on the following Sunday ; and the next week a company, consisting of the four sisters of his wife, with the husbands of three of them, two



other individuals, and the children of several of the party, nearly filled my humble habitation, and increased the number of Indian children at school to four. These of course had to be taught their alphabet, and the adults likewise, who all expressed their determination to learn God's word, to which the majority have constantly adhered.

Saci-barra, or Cornelius, (by which name he was baptized in the course of the next year,) was regular in supplying his children with food. I also experienced the benefit, as they frequently supplied me with game, so that I was not so much confined, as before, to salt provisions, or the small quantity of fish I could catch in the river.

Such was the commencement of the work in the Pomeroun. A single Indian, whom I had never seen, was induced, by his secret convictions, to come forward in defiance of the sorcerers of his tribe, and break, by his example, the spell which seemed to counteract the humble efforts made to introduce the Gospel in that part of the country. I have been minute in describing these circumstances of the foundation of the mission, in compliance with the request of those whose judgment I respect, and whose wishes I am bound to regard, and also because no portion of the eventual success can be ascribed to the labours of the missionary, but proceeded from God alone, whose Spirit had prepared the hearts of this interesting family.

The Gospel now seemed likely to take root among this tribe, and we obtained an additional attendant,

the father of the women before mentioned. My little hut would by no means hold all, so they suspended their hammocks beneath the roof of the future mission dwelling. Matters being in this encouraging state, I felt anxious to extend the sphere of labour, but resolved to wait a short time before making any fresh attempt. The people with me, though well disposed, required much instruction, and from them and others I had heard much of the denunciations of their sorcerers. It might have been attended with ill consequences to have exposed them to probable persecution, which might have followed any hasty attempt, until they were at least grounded in the simplest doctrines of the Gospel.

The following incident, however, led me to commence at once with other families of their tribe. While engaged one afternoon in teaching the little school, a violent thunder-storm came on, which compelled an Indian, with his wife and children, to bring their canoe to land for the purpose of seeking shelter. I saw them looking at our little abode, which they never before would visit, and asked them to enter till the storm abated. They did so, and the man seemed amazed at the sight of the Indian children learning their alphabet. After inquiring about his own children, to whom he seemed much attached, I pressed him to learn things good and profitable to eternal salvation, or at least to allow them to do so. He was moved, but would not yield, and seemed indignant that others should have dared to attend instruction without the consent of their

tribe, and said that before anything of the kind were done, the "capitan" should have made all of them acquainted with it. He was merely seeking to excuse himself, as I saw ; but to remove this objection, I asked him if he and his family would consider these things well, if laid before him by the mouth of the chief? He answered that he would, and went his way, the storm having ceased. I could but look upon this incident as a call to bring the matter to an issue without delay.

Accordingly I soon after visited the settlement of their chief in my small canoe, which had an unusual number of paddlers, there being myself, a black boy and girl, one of our Indian men, and his wife, who wished to accompany us. The chief we went to see had no more clothing, when we first met him, than the meanest individual of his tribe ; but after returning my salutation, he soon put on one or two European garments, and then entered into a long conversation. He was better acquainted with English than any individual of his nation whom I had previously met with : but cared very little for spiritual things. There was, however, one point of advantage. He had seen and conversed with Bishop Coleridge the year before, and could not deny that he had given his assent to the Bishop's proposition, that he should induce his people to place themselves under Christian instruction. I now called on him to fulfil his words : and to set an example in his own person to all the others.

His Indian name he told me was "Waramaraka,"

which is derived from the name of the ornamented gourd or rattle used by their sorcerers. He was however known to the settlers by the name of John William. He was shrewd and intelligent; but both himself and his people were much contaminated by intercourse with civilized persons, and very different from the simple-minded family who had joined me. They all attended, however, with outward reverence at our solemn worship that night in the forest.

The next morning we again had family prayers; after which he presented to me two fine lads, each about thirteen years of age; and desired me to teach them. He then took his gun; and the youths provided themselves with hammocks, paddles, and their bows and arrows; and we all proceeded to visit the people at other settlements who acknowledged him as their head. I found myself regarded with great curiosity at the first place we came to: and after an interview of about an hour, during which we were regaled with crabs and cassava bread, and my companion was served with paiwari, (the intoxicating drink made by the Indians,) the mother of the family called her son "Ifili," a handsome youth of about eleven, and put on him a white shirt. The father then delivered him over to me, together with his sister, a little girl about seven years old. Both parents promised to visit me on the sabbath. We again embarked; our small craft being hardly able to contain us all.

The settlements we had visited were on the Tapacuma, but we now re-entered the Arapiaco;

and having landed, proceeded through the forest, following each other in Indian file along the narrow path, to three other Indian places. We were received with great hospitality at each, and again feasted with crabs and cassava bread. The crabs were of a purple colour, and I at first wondered at finding them so far inland, but afterwards learned that the Indians go in their canoes to the sea, at certain seasons; and having first plastered their naked bodies with mud and clay to keep off the musquitoes, which are beyond measure annoying, they catch the crabs, and put them in *kwakes*, or small close baskets, with which they load their canoes, and return home to feast on them for several days. They are immoderately fond of them. Having already partaken of crabs as much as I wished, I felt compelled to decline taking any more: but my companion checked me, and said that I should give offence if I did not accept of all the food offered to me. "It is our fashion," said he; "if you are not able to eat it, you must carry it away with you." He conducted himself with great gravity, and was received with much ceremony. At every house we came to, the owner *twice* desired him to be seated; and when the *paiwari* was brought, he was *twice* desired to drink; and when he had drunk, the woman in attendance immediately took the bowl, replenished it, and offered it again. The same invitations to drink then followed from the observant host; and after he had again done so, he handed what remained to the boys. To every invitation to sit or to drink,

or to any expression of civility whatever, the word "Waang," was the invariable response. This, an expression of polite acknowledgment, is almost the only word in their language of disagreeable sound. They continually repeat it, being very polite to each other.

At one house we found a man sitting in his hammock, and practising on a violin, which he had procured on a visit to the coast.

My companion John William pointed out a spot in the forests as the place where he had once encountered and killed a bush-master, a most dangerous snake. I congratulated him on this; but remarked that strong drink was dangerous, and that he should not take so much as he had already done that day. He seemed greatly amused at such simplicity, as he considered it, and to convince me of the strength of his head, (a quality which they highly value,) he said that he could drink two bottles of English porter without being intoxicated. The warning was repeated, but without effect.

The last settlement we visited was much the largest, and contained the neatest houses. Here assembled the people from the places we had previously visited. The same ceremonies were gone through, the same compliments passed, and paiwari was offered and drunk as before. I was then called on to explain the object of my visit, which I endeavoured to do faithfully, using the plainest terms I could think of. The chief followed my remarks with an explanatory speech, in the course of which,



when he stated my wish that their children should be placed with me for instruction, I was surprised to see some of the little ones run to their mothers, who caught them up in their arms, looking at me with intense curiosity. It seemed as if the women half suspected me of some evil design against their children : and they were at first as little inclined to place them with me, as an English mother would be to give her darlings to the care of an Indian.

All that I could get from these people was a promise to talk the matter over : and as John William obstinately declined going any further that day, I was obliged to take my leave. Indeed he had drunk so much, that his presence would have been little assistance to the propagation of the Gospel anywhere. I felt disgusted with him ; a feeling which was fully shared by the Indian I had brought with me ; who, pointing to my foot, which had been cut in crossing a swamp, said, " You hurt yourself : but they mean to get drunk now, and will not mind your words."

The results of this little expedition were, on the whole, of a favourable character. It imparted an additional knowledge of Indian life and manners ; and I found that these " barbarians " were in many respects, " no ways barbarous : " but gentle and hospitable to strangers, and very polite to each other, after their own fashion. It was however too evident, that intemperance was the bane of their race : and I saw that I must seek an interpreter less addicted to that vice than their chief ; for whose friendship

and assistance I could but feel grateful, though his company and example more than counterbalanced all the help we could derive from the former, while his habits remained unaltered.

The number of Indian children at the school was now doubled; and though they were all in a state of total ignorance, yet the most difficult point, to get them to attend, had been gained. They were all very docile and gentle in their dispositions. Three of the boys were strong and useful lads, and very expert in all things necessary to a life in the forests, as I soon found.

A few days after their arrival, an alarm was given that a camudi snake had made its appearance close to the school: and we proceeded to search for it. It was soon found in a hole, whither it had retired, after helping itself to a fowl belonging to Jeannette, around which it had tightly coiled itself. While the rest of the party stood by with stout sticks, one of the Indian lads, who had assumed the English name of Barnwell, took his bow and arrow, and having taken deliberate aim at the neck, (which I was unable to distinguish among the variegated folds of its body,) he transfixing it with an arrow, the barbed point of which stuck deep in the ground. The snake immediately threw out its body with a convulsive effort, and writhed itself with the most rapid motions, until several of the vertebræ were dislocated by the heavy blows it received from us. Then the youth with unerring aim sent another arrow through its head, behind the eyes. The snake was then hung

up and skinned: but continued slowly to contract different parts of its body for two hours. It was a small one, wanting an inch or two of eight feet: but it was very thick in proportion to its length.

These Indian lads were of the greatest service to me as paddlers. With their ready assistance I was enabled to visit any settlement within ten or fifteen miles, and soon had the happiness of inducing another interesting family to join us from a settlement on the Arapiaco, which I had not before visited.

Before, however, I could go over all parts of the adjacent country, as I had resolved, and was now enabled to do, I was attacked by a severe fever, during the heavy rains at the latter part of November. This continued very violent for several days, and then assumed the form of an intermittent, which attacked me at intervals for the next eleven months.

In the following March I was so ill that Mr. Pickersgill, the gentleman before alluded to, sent his boat to convey me across the river to his residence; where I was kindly nursed by himself and family until I had somewhat recovered. During my illness Cornelius and the other Indians showed every kindness they could; but nothing could exceed the attention of the old negro woman. For some few weeks our school was broken up; but as soon as the people heard that I was getting better, they came again, and our congregation increased, till at the end of the year we had nearly sixty.

So sudden a change in the disposition of these people called for every expression of praise and glory to Him from whom it proceeded, and whose work alone it was. Still I was afraid of giving way to too sanguine expectations. The people, seeing me suffer from sickness, might, according to their superstitions, conclude that their evil spirits, in obedience to the commands of their sorcerers, were avenging themselves on me, and would shortly attack them for listening to the Gospel. But notwithstanding, during all this trying time, they showed a manifest desire for instruction, often waiting on the Sabbath for hours, till the fit went off me, that I might be able to speak to them. Their regard showed itself in many little ways, as in bringing a piece of fish, (either fresh or smoked,) a pine-apple, or other wild fruit, or a piece of cassava-bread : all gifts of little value in themselves, but highly valuable from the motive which induced them.

Mr. Duke visited the Mission before the close of the year 1840, and in the beginning of the new year the Mission-cottage was completed. It had a small gallery in front of the centre room and two tolerable chambers, and was built of rough posts, with rods nailed across, to which were tied the trooly leaves, forming the thatched sides and partitions. The roof was also composed of trooly thatch. But the great advantage was its boarded floor, which was three feet from the damp ground. I was able to occupy this dwelling by the end of February, and resigned my former wretched abode to the school children, whose

friends removed the old sooty roof soon after, and replaced it with a new one.

The chapel also had a new thatched roof put on it, and became more comfortable. The window-shutters had long since been replaced, strips of leather cut from old shoes having supplied the place of iron hinges for a short time.

Some of the Indians also began to collect posts and other materials for erecting a few lodging-places for themselves when they came on the Saturday evening. Some of these were soon after put up, though they exceedingly disliked the low situation ; and, indeed, to any one who knows how invariably they select a dry and elevated spot for the site of their settlements, it must appear no small act of self-denial, or rather desire of obtaining spiritual good, which could have induced them to frequent a place so repugnant to their habits, and to send their children to reside there.

None have so much cause as myself to regret the disadvantages of our first Mission-station ; but there was no better situation then attainable, and every inconvenience only showed that it was no prospect of worldly advantage which could at that time have actuated any of the people. The general aspect of things was cheering, although it was only to be regarded as the small beginning of a greater work for the glory of God, and the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom.

“Who hath despised the day of small things?”

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ARAWAKS.

Their character—Weapons—Name—Division of families—Marriage customs—Polygamy—Birth and rearing of children—Paiwari feasts—Funeral customs—Chiefs—Law of retaliation—Melancholy event—Progress of the Mission—Improvement in the people—Baptism—Mode of instruction—Indian astronomy—Use of pictures—Manners of school children—Prayer in the native language—Death of Mr. Duke—Visit to the Akawini lake.

THE Arawâks have always been noted for their mild and peaceable disposition, and their attachment to the European colonists. They were much esteemed, and their alliance highly valued by the Dutch, who by law exempted them from that slavery to which individuals of the other tribes were then liable on their being sold by each other.<sup>1</sup>

Although unwarlike to a degree of timidity, and desirous of preserving their independence without fighting, yet they were sometimes compelled to take up arms, both against the Maroon negroes and aggressive tribes of Indians. Stedman, in his account of Surinam, mentions an instance of an Arawâk,

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, p. 271.



who having received an act of kindness from a gentleman of that colony, presented him with a beautiful boy of the Wacawoio tribe, whom he had taken in battle. He adds, that this was extremely uncommon even in those barbarous times, as a more peaceable people does not exist.

In these casual encounters their weapons were chiefly bows and arrows and clubs. One kind of club, which they still make, though 'now only as a specimen of the weapons used by their ancestors, is of a very formidable description. It is made of the hardest and heaviest wood, and has a broad blade, thick in the middle, and with sharp edges. The handle is covered with cotton, wound tightly round it, to prevent the hand from slipping, and it has also a stout loop of the same material, which is placed round the wrist. They call it "sapakana." Some of these were of large size, and required both hands to wield them.

They are now well provided with fire-arms, and skilled in the use of them, though it is only against the birds and beasts of the forest that they are at present employed. This tribe formerly furnished 400 men, all well acquainted with the country in the neighbourhood of the plantations, and of great service as rangers.

They are called Arawâks by the other tribes and the colonists ; but that is not the name by which they designate themselves in their converse with each other. Each Arawâk calls himself a "Loko ;" and speaks of his tribe and language as those of the

“Lokono,” which word is the plural of the former, and literally means “*the people*.”<sup>1</sup>

Their tribe exhibits in its customs traces of an organization which was probably much more perfect in former times than it is at present. They are divided into families, each of which has a distinct name, as the *Siwidi*, *Karuafudi*, *Onisidi*, &c. Unlike our families, these all descend in the female line, and no individual of either sex is allowed to marry another of the same family name. Thus, a woman of the *Siwidi* family bears the same name as her mother, but neither her father nor her husband can be of that family. Her children and the children of her daughters will also be called *Siwidi*, but both her sons and daughters are prohibited from an alliance with any individual bearing the same name; though they may marry into the family of their father, if they choose. These customs are strictly observed, and any breach of them would be considered as wicked.

Mr. Hillhouse, who resided among them for some years, has given the names of the various families of this tribe, to the number of twenty-seven,<sup>2</sup> most of which I have met with.

The shades of character among these Indians

<sup>1</sup> Each American tribe seems, with national vanity, to consider itself as pre-eminently “the people.” The word “Carinya,” by which the Caribs of Guiana designate themselves, has precisely the same meaning, “*the people*.”

Even the Esquimaux in the north assume the name of “Keralit,” or *men*, and the appellation which the Iroquois give to themselves is “The chief of men.”—Robertson’s Hist. of America, book iv.

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery Martin’s West Indies. p 35.

vary as much as in Europeans. In general they are faithful and attached to their wives, with whom they live very happily,<sup>1</sup> except where polygamy is practised. They are also fond of their children, and so indulgent that they very rarely indeed chastise them. Little reverence is consequently paid by the child to its parents; the boys in particular are so little controlled by the mother, as to be remarkable for their disregard of her. In every race there is probably more parental love than filial affection, while the children are young, but this seems particularly the case with the Indians. The Indian mother may be seen following and calling her son, who is perhaps pursuing some unfortunate lizard with his tiny arrow, but not the slightest notice will he take of her, until it suits his pleasure to do so. This is during childhood. But when they grow up, and become themselves the heads of families, there is no want either of respect or attachment towards their aged parents.

Parents frequently contract marriages for their children during infancy or childhood, and this engagement is considered binding on the part of the

<sup>1</sup> The Indian wife would sometimes accompany her husband on dangerous expeditions. Waterton, describing one of these, in which the white gentleman commanding the party was severely wounded, and two Indian chiefs, his supporters, were killed, by the Maroon negroes, in 1801, thus speaks of the wife of one of them, who had accompanied the expedition. "She was a fine young woman, and had her long black hair fancifully braided in a knot on the top of her head, and fastened with a silver ornament. She unloosed it, and falling on her husband's body, covered it with her hair, bewailing his untimely end with the most heart-rending cries." Some of our Indians said that they knew this woman, who died at Mahaica a few years ago.

young couple ; the females, especially, are allowed little choice in the matter. Sometimes they are promised to persons who have already one or more wives. An incident of this kind came under my notice, soon after the Indians in the Pomeroon began to attend instruction.

A young female was pointed out to me as having been betrothed to a man who already had a wife and children. As she, her father, and all his family were under Christian instruction, it became necessary to interfere. Her father was therefore told that such a connexion was contrary to the law of Christ, and must be broken off. To this he was very averse, and urged his promise given, the ancient customs of his people, and many other things in excuse, but as it was not a case in which these could be attended to, and as he saw that there was no possibility of keeping the customs of heathenism, and following Christ at the same time, he at last said that he would not enforce the matter, if the other parties could be induced to give it up. The young girl was then called, and on hearing the law of Christ with respect to marriage, she at once expressed her determination to obey it.

A few days after, the young man came, as it seemed, to claim his bride, and was not a little amazed to find how the matter stood. He was a native of Ituribisi, where the instructions of the Rev. W. Austin were beginning to take effect. He had been a hearer of the word in that quarter, which had not been without some effect on his mind, and

now, finding himself assailed where he had little expected any such thing, he reluctantly withdrew his claim. He desired, however, permission to see the young woman before he went away. She was sent for, and he then formally demanded restitution of a hammock, some calico, a comb, and various other articles which he had formerly given her, and which were, in fact, nearly the whole of her little property. This demand was complied with, and the matter ended much more agreeably than I had expected. It was one of those circumstances which seemed to show the favour of God to our infant mission. Had not His grace touched their hearts, the family might have left us, and become enemies to the truth ; but as divine providence ordered it, a good example was set by them, and a deeply rooted evil custom received a severe blow at a critical time. The young woman led an exemplary life, and died unmarried four years after.

There are no particular marriage ceremonies observed in their heathen state. The wife's father expects the bridegroom to work for him in clearing the forest, and in other things, and the young couple often remain with him until an increasing family renders a separate establishment necessary.

On the birth of a child, the ancient Indian etiquette requires the father to take to his hammock, where he remains for some days, and receives the congratulations of his friends. This custom is still observed by some individuals. An instance of it came under my own observation, where the man,



without a single bodily ailment, lay in his hammock, and was carefully attended by the women, while the mother of the newborn infant was cooking food.<sup>1</sup>

The women carry their infants in small hammocks, which are slung over one shoulder. When the child has grown bigger, it is carried upon the mother's hip, clinging to her body, with one leg before and the other behind it. They suckle one child until the birth of another, and sometimes for a short time after. The want of cows, goats, and other animals fit for supplying milk, together with their great reluctance to use it from any animal, is probably the reason for this custom, which must weaken the mother considerably.

The boys are early trained to fish and paddle, and as they get older they accompany the men on their hunting expeditions. The girls are obliged to labour at an early age, and assist the women, whose time is much more fully occupied than that of the men.

They lead a simple life, without quarrels, except such as arise from that fruitful source of evil, intoxication. Their native drink, the paiwari, has been already mentioned. It is prepared in a very disgusting way. The flat cakes of cassava bread are toasted brown, and then masticated by all the old women who can be brought together. Water being added, it is left till fermentation has taken place, and the guests then assemble to the feast,

<sup>1</sup> This is no hardship for an Indian mother, who suffers but little. I once saw a Warau woman carry her infant, two hours after its birth, from one cottage to another, at some little distance, where she chose to remain.



where drinking and dancing are kept up until all the liquor is consumed. Some of the Aráwâks, who have become ashamed, say that they do not now chew the bread from which this drink is prepared. As both the making and drinking of this liquor have been long discountenanced among our people, I have had no opportunity of ascertaining the truth of this, but have seen the Caribi women sitting round a large earthen vessel, engaged in the disgusting manner above described. There is another drink made in a more cleanly manner from potatoes, called kasiri.

When a death takes place among this tribe, notice is given to the neighbouring settlements by the discharge of guns, and preparation is immediately made for the funeral. They formerly used to make a rude coffin, by hollowing a solid piece of wood, or by cutting a small canoe in halves to receive the body, but now some of them manage to construct one of boards. There are certain dances connected with their ancient funeral customs, which will be hereafter described, as also the ceremonies practised by their sorcerers, and the superstitions inculcated by them.

Their chiefs, or captains, are either appointed, or confirmed in their office by the colonial government. They were expected to summon their men together at the command of the governor ; and to lead them to battle if required. At present, there is scarcely the shadow of authority possessed by any of them, except over his own family. The rank and dignity of the ancient cacique has perished with the title.

When any offence is taken, they seldom manifest it otherwise than by not speaking to the offending party. This seems to grieve them much. If one tells another that he is *bad*, it is almost looked upon as a curse. As to profane swearing it is unknown in their language, which even wants the word to express it. After a long inquiry, one of their chiefs told me ; “ We, *in our language*, do not swear, it is only your people who do that.”<sup>1</sup> A just reproof, surely, of those profane habits by which too many of our countrymen are distinguished abroad as well as at home.

When any crime, such as murder, is committed, they seem to follow strictly the law of retaliation. A tragical incident of this nature took place the year before I went among them. Two young men, who were (I believe) sons of their oldest chief, were invited to a *paiwari* dance at an Indian settlement, near the Arapiaco. Several white men also attended, as was too frequently the case. These left the following morning, after the dance was over, but had not long been gone before the younger brother, who had taken up his gun, as if going to his canoe, turned round and discharged it at his wife.

She received the contents in her bosom as she was kneeling on the ground—fell on her face, and expired. The cause of this (if the deed were intentional), was probably jealousy of something that had occurred during the debauch of the previous night.

<sup>1</sup> A *drunken* Indian will, however, sometimes swear fearfully in *English*.

No inquiry was made, however, as to his motives. The nearest relative to the poor young woman started up, declared his intention of seeking vengeance, and then hastened after the white men; to whose laws he intended to consign the culprit. But before he could overtake them, the fearful deed had been avenged by another hand.

When the young man saw what he had done, he stood for some little time aghast; then, perceiving his countrymen approaching to seize him, he fled to the forest. He was soon taken and brought back to the fatal spot. There two of them held him by the hands, and he submitted to his fate from his own brother, Kaikaiko, who took up a billet of wood, and killed him by a blow upon the temples.

This tragical occurrence was related to me by the settlers, and by the family at whose dwelling it took place. An aged Indian pointed out to me the now abandoned spot where it occurred, and where these two unhappy victims, who, but for an evil practice, might have witnessed the introduction of the hope of the Gospel, and grown old surrounded by their children, now sleep in one untimely grave.

The elder brother, who had thus become the minister of justice, and doubtless thought at the time that he was acting right, never seemed happy afterwards. He latterly attended Christian instruction, and seemed desirous of embracing our religion, but having unhappily taken two wives long before, he could not make up his mind to part with either of them, till death rendered it too late.

The horror excited by the melancholy event above related, had a beneficial effect upon the minds of those who saw or heard of it. It shewed more plainly than any words could do, the evil tendency of those drunken feasts in which they so much delighted; and was not without its effect in inducing many to listen more readily to the doctrines of that Gospel, which causes men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

In the beginning of 1841, we received an important accession, in the person of Saciba, or Jacobus, the other chief of the Pomeroon Arawâks; whose example was followed by his numerous relatives. Neither of the chiefs of this tribe possessed the simple character of many of their people, who had had less intercourse with civilized persons. It is a sad fact, that the more an Indian knows of our language and manners, the worse his character is considered. It is a common expression of the settlers, "That Indian has too much English;" implying that he is likely to prove a rogue. Such is the effect of civilization without Christianity.

It now became a pleasant sight to see the Indian canoes coming in from different directions on the Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Our congregation had already increased to about 84 persons. A sudden and manifest improvement took place in their apparel, all being anxious to procure European clothing. Owing to the utter darkness of the minds of most, undue importance soon began to be attached to this; and it became necessary to caution them

repeatedly against supposing that any change in external appearance could avail in the sight of Him who "looketh on the heart."

Several of the people now became so anxious for instruction, as to bring sufficient cassava bread to last them as food for a week, with what few fish the river produced. Fish are not so plentiful in that deep river, as in the lakes and shallower streams.

In the course of the year we were visited by the Rev. Mr. Duke, who baptized twelve adults, and twenty-five children of different ages, for whom myself and the baptized Indians stood sponsors. There were 120 persons present. This was a day to be remembered by us all. The services were remarkable for their solemnity, and the reverent awe visible in the countenance of each convert to the religion of Jesus; while their wilder brethren gazed with great curiosity, some of them standing on the seats, and others climbing up into the windows, to see the administration of that Holy Sacrament.

After the baptisms, the several couples were immediately married; a rule invariably adopted in all our missions. Most of these early converts were, when I left them, still living, and walking according to their Christian profession; one or two had given way to temptation, and two had fallen asleep, of one of whom, (the man who accompanied me in my first visit to their chief,) I have a good hope that he has entered into the joy of his Lord.

Other Catechumens now came forward, and the mission cottage was well frequented by them.



I was anxious not only to impart to them the knowledge that leadeth to salvation, but also to improve their minds, and enlarge the circle of their ideas, by descriptions of other countries and people, to them most wonderful. Pictures, especially, excited their attention. The most valuable book, (not of a sacred character,) which I possessed for this purpose, was a volume of the "Saturday Magazine," which the late Bishop Coleridge, thinking it might prove useful, had given me at Barbados, with some others, and his blessing. The Indians were much interested in the engravings, which I endeavoured to explain to them. The wicker idol, in which the ancient Britons burnt their victims, particularly excited their wonder, and they could not comprehend how the former inhabitants of our country could be so cruel. They considered them even worse than their ancient enemies, the Caribs; of whose ferocity they still entertain a lively idea. They thus learned to think more highly of the power of the gospel of peace, which has abolished, wherever its truth prevails, the cruel and barbarous works of heathen darkness. In this manner it was easy to blend religious instruction with interesting information, when catechetical duties were over.

They were also anxious to teach me all they knew themselves, which was but little, except the arts of hunting and fishing peculiar to their country, in which no people on earth can excel them.

They had some rude knowledge of the stars, which was probably acquired by the experience of their an-



cestors in former voyages. They distinguished some of them as constellations ; one of which is called the *camudi*, from its fancied resemblance to that snake. They call the milky way by two names, one of which signifies the path of the maipuri or tapir ; and the other is “waiè onnakici abonaha,”—*the path of the bearers of waiè*, which is a species of white clay, of which their vessels are made, and which they suppose the nebulous spots to resemble. Venus is distinguished by the name of “Warakoma ;” and Jupiter is generally called “wiwa kalimero,” *the star of brightness*.

Great was their astonishment at learning some of the more simple facts of Astronomy, which many of them seemed able to comprehend. They were delighted to learn the cause of eclipses, which had always puzzled and alarmed them. They did not show much emotion, however, at the appearance of the large comet soon after, which filled the churches on the coast to overflowing with the terrified negro population. The Arawâks seemed to think an eclipse much more portentous than the “star with the tail.”

The properties of the magnet excited much wonder ; and a small pocket compass was regarded with great interest. They all looked upon it as something supernatural, and though its use was soon understood, yet they regarded it with evident suspicion for some time. A very grave man, who had been induced to take it into his hand, after it had been shaken and turned in every possible way,

when he saw it still pointing towards the north star, delivered his opinion in these words : " It is alive." When convinced that the evil spirits had nothing to do with it, they said that the knowledge of its construction was a gift from God to the white men.

They were totally unacquainted with geography beyond the limits of Guiana. They knew that the white people came from the other side of the great sea ; but were amazed at hearing that it was so large as to take a vessel some weeks to cross it. They had no knowledge of the existence of the Andes, or of the immense ocean to the westward. They were always delighted to be shown on a map the various countries of Europe, or those parts of the world from whence the Africans and Hindoos had been brought to their shores. Of history and the affairs of other nations they knew nothing. They had, however, an indistinct idea that there had been great wars between the white nations in the days of their fathers. They knew the name of one European warrior alone, Bonaparte ; whose fame had reached the ears of some, long before they had heard the name of the Saviour Jesus pronounced except in a profane or blasphemous manner.

We were much in want of a set of Scripture prints, which would have been of great help in enabling them to understand the historical parts of Holy Writ. These they could comprehend, but very imperfectly, by oral communication. A set of engravings had been sent out from England, but never reached their destination ; and I was often obliged

to make a rude sketch before they could understand the most simple historical circumstance.

The creation, and the fall of man, the deluge, and the giving of the law on Sinai, were those parts of Old Testament history which most interested them ; but they seemed to regard them, in a great measure, as mere historical facts ; and one of them observed, after I had been carefully explaining to them the Ten Commandments : " This word is good, but we knew most of it before." Nothing seemed to have a permanent effect on their hearts but the narrative of the passion of our Lord. Some of them did not even care for this, but its effect was perceptible on most, even when it led to no real conversion. Nothing but the love of God, as manifested in his Son, dying for *their* sins, seemed to create more than a temporary interest in any of them. I believe this to be invariably the case. I found it to be so with the Caribs, Waraus, and other tribes at a later period ; and am satisfied that unless this be the groundwork of a missionary's teaching, his labour is but nought.

Most of the settlers left the river in the following year, owing to the failure of the Arnotto trade, and the introduction of white pine and other cheap woods from North America, which superseded, in a great degree, the more costly but durable productions of the native forests. Being thus isolated from civilized society, except when an occasional traveller called at the mission, an excellent opportunity was afforded of investigating the Indian manners, ideas, language,

and traditions. Some of these last will be given in the conclusion of this work.

Our school gradually increased to nearly thirty Arawâk children, but there were always some absent, from occasional scarcity of food, and their natural desire of change. I was greatly averse to letting them go home; but soon found that they would stay away altogether if they thought undue restraint were practised: and after a while it became apparent that the good they did in teaching their friends at their homes in the forest, more than made amends for the evil<sup>o</sup> occasioned by their irregularity.

These children used to assist in cultivating a little garden, and keeping the paths free from weeds. Occasionally they went to gather the forest fruits. A fine cokarito palm grew close to the little school, and the day on which one of its enormous bunches of fruit was cut was always a time of rejoicing. Shooting with bows and arrows, either at birds, or at a mark set up for the purpose; catching fish with a small rod, and other Indian pursuits, filled up the time which was not occupied by the school. I made several attempts to introduce English games, as ball, &c. among them; but they met with no success. Even their amusements were all of a practical character, and such as would help them to get a living.

They generally bathed, morning, noon, and evening, and more expert swimmers are scarcely to be found. They used to spring into the water, one after another in rapid succession, with a great noise



The Cokarito Palm







and splashing, keeping in rapid motion, and swimming with the head often under water. Sometimes they amused themselves with turning over, striking at their companions with their feet at the same time, which was dexterously avoided by diving.

There was great difficulty in keeping the boys and girls from bathing together, to which they had always been accustomed. Separate places were assigned them, but even then they would sometimes cross the Arapiaco, and meet among the moco-moca and other aquatic plants at the opposite bank. To convince them of the impropriety of this was difficult, and it was some time before a final stop could be put to the practice.

With the stronger lads to paddle the canoe, we often visited the Indian habitations. Saturday was generally chosen, as no school was then kept. Sometimes we went on the Friday afternoon, sleeping at one of their places, and prosecuting the journey next morning; and seldom failed of returning at night with several canoes full of people for service on the following day. In a mission, as in a parish, the only way of reclaiming those who give way to indolence, is by visiting them at their own abodes.

In less than a year from the time when the first Arawâk was induced, by divine grace, to seek the knowledge of God, we had more than half the people of the tribe in that quarter attending as worshippers in our humble house of prayer. Some months before this, happening to awake one morning

earlier than usual, I was surprised to hear a low sound proceeding from a place where several of the Indians had taken up their abode the preceding night. Listening attentively, I heard one of them offer up a prayer in their own language; after which all joined in the Lord's Prayer. This has ever since been the practice in many families, and often overheard in secret by myself and brethren in the work, but never has the sound been so pleasant to me, as when it first gave indication that they no longer looked on their Great Father as afar off, but, after long ages of ignorance, were led to know Him as the God that heareth the humble prayer of his creatures. In the course of the day I asked the man to repeat what he had said in his prayer, and wrote it down, to translate at some future period; when I found that it did not contain any improper expression or petition, of which I had been apprehensive, but that it was as humble an acknowledgment of sin and unworthiness as could be conceived. It was not, however, offered in the Redeemer's name; this defect was pointed out, and they afterwards closed their prayers with an expression, answering to our own, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the course of this year the Mission sustained a loss, by the unexpected death of Mr. Duke, who was much lamented. His part in its establishment has been already related; he visited it more than once, and it must have been a satisfaction to him to

have been permitted to behold its promising appearance.

It soon became possible to extend the sphere of labour. The Arawâks informed me that many of their tribe resided at a place called Akawini, and some offered to accompany me on a visit to them.

Having visited the settlement of Cornelius, and slept there, we set out early next morning, and had a cool walk of some hours through the forest. At length we came to a very narrow stream, which it was necessary to descend. The Indians had expected to find a small canoe, which they usually kept there, but some person had removed it.

A tree of enormous size had fallen near the spot, and lay with part of its roots elevated several feet from the ground. An Indian climbed upon it, and with a heavy piece of wood struck one of the broad fluted projections of the trunk near the root, which gave a loud ringing sound that echoed through the forest and across the swamp. This was to give notice to the party who might have borrowed the canoe, that we were in need of it.

A man and a woman, who had been fishing in it, returned as soon as they heard the signal. It was old and rotten, and the sides were so low that the water entered in three places, as soon as our party was seated. To remedy this, some thick stems of the moco-moca plant were cut and grooved. These being fitted on to the upper edge of the canoe made it an inch or two higher; and we then proceeded,

sitting as still as we could ; one of the party baling out all the way, while another paddled us through the still water.

We came to a beautiful savannah and lake, and saw on a small island the cottage of the principal man in that secluded district. It was embosomed amid the tall trees, and the evening sun shone brightly on its thatched roof. Its owner received us kindly, and summoned his people, with whom we had an interesting meeting, which was prolonged to so late an hour, that several of them were unable to return to their homes that night. They therefore took up their quarters in an old house on the island. One of the corner posts of this being rotten, gave way. A child fell into the fire beneath her, and was severely burned. Fortunately no other person was injured, but this distressing accident threw a gloom over our visit.

These people had had less intercourse with civilized men than any others whom I had yet seen, owing to their retired situation. The lake discharges its superabundant waters into the Pomeroon, by a small stream, which is blocked up with fallen trees. They said that no white man had previously visited their settlements.

The head man became a catechumen, but died soon after. The next in influence had two wives, and was consequently an opponent of the religion of Jesus.

New and more extensive fields of labour soon pre-

sented themselves, which took up most of my time and attention, and some years elapsed before the majority of the inhabitants of the beautiful lake of Akawini became willing to hear the Gospel of Christ, which was at length brought about by the persuasions of the Christians of their own tribe.

“God giveth the increase.”

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CARIBS.

Account of the writer's first visit to the country of the Caribs—Their costume and appearance—Attendance at the Mission—Their national character and customs—A glance at their condition and habits during the last century—Their cruel wars—Ancient Chiefs—Assistance to the Colonists in 1763—Cannibalism—Favourable change.

THE upper part of the Pomeroon is inhabited by the Caribs, who occupy a large tract of country, including not only the banks of that river, but those of the Manawarin, a tributary of the Moruca. They are more numerous in that district than in any other part of the lower lands of Guiana.

Their settlements were much higher up the river than the site of the mission, and they would not visit it, though often passing in their canoes. The appearance of their naked bodies, and faces painted with the bright vermilion of the arnotto, was interesting, though wild and savage. At some distance from us there was a "water-side," or landing place, on the banks of the river, where they often took up their quarters for the night; and the sound of the bamboo flute proceeding from their bivouac, would sometimes reach our ears, when the noisy parrots had retired to roost, and the last breeze from the distant sea-coast had died away at sunset. Their



music when close at hand is harsh and unpleasant, but it was so mellowed by passing over the still water, as to possess a plaintive and melancholy sweetness ; so that one might have fancied that they were bewailing their benighted and ignorant condition.

Such was by no means the case. They had, as yet, no idea of anything better than their present state ; and while they possessed health, were perfectly satisfied to eat, drink, and enjoy the passing moment, without care for future interests, whether of a temporal or eternal nature.

On one occasion, some members of the family of their chief had called to visit me. I was surprised at first, but soon discovered from their manner that they were slightly intoxicated, which accounted for so unusual a circumstance.

Having acquired all the information I could concerning them, the Arawâks at the mission were informed of my intention to visit the Caribi country. Some of them offered to accompany me. The two nations seemed on friendly terms, often trafficking with each other ; but a quarrel had taken place in the neighbourhood a short time before, between two individuals, in the course of which the one betook himself to his cutlass, while the other ran for his club. The affair ended with mutual threats. It did not seem expedient to take any adult person with me, as unpleasant results might ensue ; for even friendly feelings, as I knew by experience, might lead to a paiwari drinking, and a feast or a fray

would alike be but little conducive to the great end in view. The youths who generally paddled my canoe seemed best fitted for my companions in this expedition.

Accompanied by four of these lads, I set out one Monday morning, in June, 1841 ; the Arawâks, who had been to church on the previous day, standing on the banks of the river, and waving their hands, in token of wishing good success to the Gospel of Christ among their neighbours and ancient foes. We went briskly up the river for several miles with the flowing tide, and turning up a small stream to the left, arrived before noon at the first Caribi settlement, called "Kamwatta," (or *the Bamboo*,) from an enormous cluster of those trees which stands near it. This was the residence of "France," the brother of their chief. He was not at home, being absent with most of the male inhabitants, but his two wives were present, with several other women, all busily engaged in their usual occupations.

The appearance of these women was very barbarous, as is indeed the case with most of the Caribi females. Their dress was merely a strip of blue cloth, and their naked bodies were smeared with the red arnotto, which gave them the appearance of bleeding from every pore. As if this were not sufficiently ornamental, some of them had endeavoured to improve its appearance by blue spots upon their bodies and limbs. They wore round each leg, just below the knee, a tight strap of cotton, painted red, and another above each ancle. These are woven

on while the girl is young, and hinder the growth of the parts by their compression, while the calf, which is unconfined, appears, in consequence, unnaturally large. All the Caribi women wear these, which they call *sapuru*, and consider as a great addition to their beauty. But the most singular part of their appearance is presented by the lower lip, which they perforate, and wear one, two, or three pins sticking through the hole with the points outward. Before they procured pins, thorns or other similar substances were thus worn. Should they wish to use the pin, they will take it out, and again replace it in the lip when its services are no longer required.

Of these women I inquired respecting their husbands, and received an answer in their language, very copious, but to me perfectly unintelligible. Perceiving this, they pointed to a man standing at some distance, whom I found to be a stranger from the distant interior. He was the most picturesque object I had yet seen in Guiana, possessing a symmetrical figure, which was seen to great advantage in his native costume.

The cloth which is worn by the Caribi men, secured by a cord round the loins, is often of sufficient length to form a kind of scarf. As it would otherwise trail on the ground, they dispose it in a graceful manner over the shoulders, so that part of it falls upon the bosom, while the end hangs down the back. It is often adorned with large cotton tassels, and is the most decent and serviceable, as

well as the most picturesque covering worn by any of the native tribes. The coronal of feathers for the head is sometimes worn, but not generally. The head is usually adorned by a large mass of arnotto, stuck on the hair at the top of the forehead, and very frequently the foreheads and upper parts of the cheeks are ornamented by various figures, painted with the same vermilion colour. This serves to render them ferocious in their appearance, and was probably first adopted by their ancestors with that view, but the modern Caribs have an idea that it contributes greatly to the beauty of their appearance. Some men of this tribe also smear their bodies with the arnotto, in the manner already mentioned as practised by the women.

There was also at this settlement an old man, whose white hair and eyes, that were dim with age, showed that he must have far exceeded the usual term of human life. He lay in his hammock continually, and seemed to have lost part of his faculties. This old man could doubtless once have told many a tale of strife and carnage, derived from his ancestors, and some perhaps witnessed by himself, during the sanguinary contests in which his nation was engaged in his youth.

The stranger whom I have mentioned received directions from the principal wife of the master of the settlement, and I understood, by the names used, that he was to guide me through the forest to the residence of the chief. To this I gladly assented, and dismissed my lads with the canoe, with directions

for them to go to a certain place on the banks of the main river, where I would rejoin them. The Carib then threw over his shoulders the elegant tasselled scarf worn by his nation, and taking his gun, led the way into the forest. The walk was cool, the trees magnificent in size and beauty, and the path good, with the exception of a swamp which we had to cross. As this was always a difficult task, and one which occasioned me some delay, I lost sight of our guide for a time, but he soon reappeared, standing among the tall trees on a bank above us, and as he saw Ifili, the Arawák boy whom I had retained with me, fetching water in a large leaf to cleanse my feet, he smiled, apparently at the inconvenience of shoes and other necessities of civilized life.

Borowai, which was the name of the village we next came to, was superior in the neatness and cleanliness of its houses to any Indian place which I had yet seen. Although several of the inhabitants were unclothed, yet none of the women were smeared with the arnotto like those at Kamwatta. The chief is called "Commodore" by the settlers, as was his father before him, and it has become the fixed surname of the family. He was gone further into the interior with his son and most of the men, to my regret; for I had calculated on persuading him to accompany me to visit his people. The principal part of the design was thus, to all appearance, frustrated.

There were but three men present, one of whom,

I was happy to find, spoke a little English. Having seated myself on a low, rudely-carved stool in the house appointed for conference among the men, I began to talk with them, telling them that good people in my own country had sent me over the great sea, to teach them how they might serve "Tamosi" (their name for the Great Spirit) acceptably, and be taken to live with him after death. They listened with great interest to my words, especially when, in giving an outline of Christian doctrine, I spoke of judgment and the eternal punishment of the wicked. I afterwards desired them to come and see me every Sabbath at the house of God. They said they had no canoes, but would tell the "Captain" all I had said, when he should return. They gave me a large pine and a cluster of ripe bananas at taking leave, which showed that they were not displeased at the visit.

There was but one settler residing in their country, and he was on the point of quitting it. We slept at his house, which was situated on a hill named Carawob, the burial-place of the ancient Caribi chiefs of Pomeroon, and at early dawn again went on our way. About nine, A.M. we arrived at a place where the Pomeroon divides into two branches; the left being the main stream, while that to the right is called Issorora. Up this latter we proceeded. The weather was delightful, and though our prospect was very limited, yet each object was beautiful and striking; the venerable forests, with the manicole palms growing out of the river, and reaching a great



height; the mirror-like stream, reflecting every leaf on its unruffled surface; the fish springing from the waters, and the splendid azure butterflies fluttering among the leaves,—all rendered the scene interesting to a stranger. Over our heads the king of the vultures hovered motionless on his strong pinions, while many of the common species were at a respectful distance, flying in circles through the sultry air. To complete the picture, a party of Caribs passed us in what are commonly called “woodskins,” which are small canoes made of the bark of the purple-heart tree.

The people at the settlements on the Issorora seemed rather pleased than otherwise at our visit, when they understood its object. Most of the men were absent from this district also, so that we seemed to have come at a very unseasonable time. In seeking for the first settlement, Pegassa, we took a wrong direction, which led us by an abandoned path, first through a very disagreeable and difficult swamp, and then through an old provision ground, so overgrown with thick grass, shrubs, and briers, that it was only with great exertion we could get through. The sun is intensely hot in these fields, as the surrounding forest prevents the breeze from cooling the air. Having at length reached the right path, I was surprised at a loud scream from three little Caribi girls, who were terrified at the object which, with scorched face, and clothes soiled with mud from the swamp, and covered with grass-seeds from the jungle, suddenly presented itself before them. One of them

took to her heels and ran shrieking to give the alarm. As this was an unpleasant introduction to these people, it seemed best to follow and attempt to pacify her, but her swiftness rendered the attempt vain. Her mother came hastily from the house to meet her, and perceiving the object of her child's alarm, said something which quieted her. There was no one but this woman at the place, and as I had collected a few words of their language at Borowai, I asked for the *man*. She smiled at the bad pronunciation of the Caribisi, and pointed with her hand to the path which led to the next settlement, Tonambo. We arrived there much fatigued.

A very tall man, named Yan, soon came in from hunting, and to him I told the cause of my visit. He seemed favourably disposed, and when I left, gave me a large pine in token of good feeling. An old woman added a piece of cassava bread.

After three days' absence we arrived at the Mission; and the first question put by the Arawâks on our return, was this, "Did you get any of them?" It showed a right feeling in some of them, who seemed very anxious to spread the little knowledge they possessed.

Three weeks elapsed without our hearing anything of the Caribs. I had given up all hopes of them, and was meditating another visit, when on my return from a day's journey among the Arawâks, I was told they had been at the Mission inquiring for me. The next day (Sunday) we had the pleasure of seeing old Commodore arrive with the people from his village.

The next sabbath he again came with nine of his people, and the following week we rejoiced to see five canoes full of Caribs of both sexes, and among them our friends from the Issorora. I soon after visited the settlement of the chief to induce him to place his children under my care for instruction, and to use his influence with the people of his tribe for the same purpose. This he promised to do. He was a well-meaning man, but ignorant, and like his people, too fond of liquor.

The national character of the Caribs has ever been that of obstinate, fearless bravery. They are acknowledged by the other tribes as superior in courage and determination, and have been always dreaded by them. They are fully aware of this, and there is consequently as much national pride in them, as in any European race. The Arawâks also possess a great degree of national pride, but it is founded on their superior intelligence and civilization; while that of the Caribs arises from the remembrance of former victories, and the consciousness of superior valour. They are, however, very credulous, and easily excited by any flying rumour, of which I have seen several instances.

They are not larger in person than the people of other tribes, but are generally very well proportioned. Their young men may claim preference over those of the other aboriginal races for elegance of form. The women, generally, do not at all equal in beauty those of the Arawâk tribe.

Their dress, and custom of painting their bodies,

has been already described. They also lubricate their skins with oil, made of the seeds of the caraba-tree. They consider this, and the use of the arnotto, as a great improvement of their beauty.

Their manner of life is the same as that of the other tribes, but they usually pay more attention to agriculture. It was the pride of the Pomeroon Caribs to see other Indians, and even Portuguese hucksters from the coast, come to them to purchase provisions in the time of scarcity. I had an instance of this feeling, so honourable to them, in a visit which I paid to one of their distant settlements. The person I went to see met me at his landing-place, and, seeing the provisions which I had brought in the canoe for the use of my crew, said to me, "Why did you bring these plantains? You were coming to a *Caribi* place, where provisions are *always* to be obtained."

They are very indiscriminate in their diet, and will eat almost anything in the shape of animal food. The large tadpoles, which may be seen in great masses swimming at the side of every stream, are called by the settlers and Arawâks, "the Caribisi pepper-pot," as they are said to use them in that dish.

The women of this tribe are noted for weaving excellent and durable hammocks of cotton, which they cultivate for that purpose. These are all made by hand, and the process is very slow and tedious; but the hammocks so made are said to surpass all others. They form an important article of their traffic; but, though expensive, the price is by no

means an adequate remuneration for the time and labour bestowed on them.

Their customs with respect to marriage do not greatly differ from those of the other tribes. With respect to the dead, their habits are said to have been very peculiar. If the person deceased were of some distinction, his bones were cleaned by the women, and carefully preserved in their houses. This custom was practised by several of the tribes of Guiana, some of which are said to have immersed the body in the water until the bones had been picked clean by the pirai and other fish, when they were carefully dried, and suspended in the roof of their habitation, as the greatest proof of attachment which could be shown.<sup>1</sup>

This custom of preserving the bones of their dead for some time, though still observed, as I have heard, in remote places, is now becoming obsolete, and must expire as Christianity spreads among them.

The present condition of these people, however barbarous it may appear to us, is infinitely better than it was formerly. It is difficult for any one who should visit them at their present peaceful settlements, to believe that they are the descendants of those savage warriors who spread terror over the West Indian Islands, and a great portion of the continent of South America.

At present they live in a tranquil state, undisturbed except by occasional quarrels among themselves, which usually originate at a paiwari feast, or from the use of

<sup>1</sup> Stedman, chap. xv.



rum. When excited, they are often ungovernably fierce, as I have witnessed ; and I once met a Carib who had lost a portion of his nose, which had been bitten off by his own brother, as he said, in a drunken quarrel. Such occurrences are not very frequent ; and disputes are generally taken to the post-holders, who use their influence to prevent quarrelling and fighting between them ; for whose protection the Indians are grateful, and by whose determinations they will faithfully abide.

But, up to the close of the last century, their savage propensities had full scope. When any dispute happened with another tribe, they were accustomed to attack those who had offended them, and, surrounding their scattered villages in the night, would make them prisoners ; the men, who would be likely to escape, were put to death, while the women, and children of both sexes, were reserved for sale.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes they attacked their enemies openly in the day time ; and it is said to have been a boast of theirs, that they would paddle their canoes against the current to the settlements they intended to attack, that the sound of their paddles might give warning of their approach, and their enemies prepare to engage them.

At that time the Caribs were considered as the most numerous as well as the most warlike of all the tribes. They were independent of the Europeans, though in alliance with them. They had no hereditary sovereigns, but chose a person whose office it

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, p. 258.



was to head them in any warlike undertaking. It was necessary for the candidates for such an office to possess more strength and courage than their fellows, and to be perfectly acquainted with every art and stratagem of savage warfare. They were required, by long fasting, to give proof of their powers of endurance, and to show their bodily strength by bearing heavy burdens. It has been even said, that the Carib who aspired to the honour of commanding his brethren, was exposed to the biting of ants for a certain time.<sup>1</sup> The man who could thus bear torture and fatigue of any kind, and was a stranger to fear, was chosen to be their captain; and the bows and arrows of the tribe were laid at his feet in token of obedience.

These customs were gradually laid aside. It was the evident interest of the colonists to flatter the pride of the Indian chiefs, which they effectually did by presenting to them insignia of office, consisting of a plate of one of the precious metals, to be worn on the bosom, and a staff of office to be borne in the hand. By degrees, the Indians came to look upon these as indispensable to the office; and the power of confirming the appointment of their chiefs fell into the hands of the colonists. The honour of the chieftainship is at present but small, and seems in a great measure hereditary among the Caribs, as those captains who are connected with our missions are all descended from their former chiefs.

The alliance of the Dutch colonists with this tribe

<sup>1</sup> Abbé Raynal's History of the Indies, Book XIII.

greatly assisted in saving them from destruction during the insurrection of 1763. The revolted negroes had nearly destroyed the colony of Berbice, the white inhabitants of which had retired on board the ships at the mouth of the river, and a rising of the slaves in Demerara and Essequibo was daily expected. The Caribi Indians were engaged by the governor of these latter colonies to take arms, and they greatly harassed the negroes. They concealed themselves in the woods by day, and set fire to their thatched houses at night, attacking their inmates as they fled out in confusion. They killed a great many, as appeared by the number of dried hands which they brought in, and for which they received a considerable reward. For each of these the sum of twenty-five florins was usually paid, and for a living captive, fifty.

Such is one portion of the dreadful picture, which the life of the Indian, as well as of every other race in the colony, presented during those sad times. But this is not all. The Caribs are said to have eaten the bodies of the slain. This is expressly asserted by Bancroft, who, as a resident in the colony, had the best opportunity of knowing the truth.

Another writer, who was himself engaged soon after in suppressing the revolted negroes in those forests, thus writes of the Caribs: "However unnatural it may seem, and however much it has been contradicted, they are anthropophagi, or cannibals; at least, they most certainly feast on their enemies,

whose flesh they tear and devour with the avidity of wolves.”<sup>1</sup>

Whatever barbarities may have been inflicted by these heathens upon the bodies of the slain, they were far exceeded by the atrocious cruelties which were exercised by the enraged colonists, on those who were taken alive. Over them the veil of oblivion should be for ever drawn.

No other tribe near the coast of Guiana has been accused of cannibalism ; and it is probable that even with respect to the Caribs, exaggeration has prevailed. It is, however, impossible to disprove the accounts handed down to us ; though it would be delightful to do so. It is needless to say that this custom no longer prevails, and of their present habits it has been observed by a recent writer : “ It is true the Caribisce make flutes of the thigh-bones of their enemies, but they abhor the idea of eating their flesh or drinking their blood, and this abhorrence is general.”<sup>2</sup>

Being desirous of knowing the ideas of the existing race as to these practices of their ancestors, I once inquired of an intelligent young Christian Carib. He became much excited, seemed both ashamed and indignant, and answered, “ That he had heard of their doing such things, but *he thought* they must have eaten the flesh of *animals*, while they pretended

<sup>1</sup> Stedman, chap. xv. The same author also mentions it incidentally in other parts of his work, as a well-known fact. He also obtained a flute, made by them, of a thigh-bone of one of their enemies, of which he has given a representation.

<sup>2</sup> M. Martin, West Indies, p. 53.

to eat that of their enemies." I made no further inquiry, as it seemed to give them pain. Wherever Christianity prevails in its truth, there barbarous practices not only fall, but come to be regarded with horror and surprise. Perhaps even in Hindostan, future generations may yet, in the fulness of gospel light, doubt the reality of the Suttees, and other abominations of their fathers.

Long before the abolition of negro slavery, the custom of the Indian tribes enslaving each other was discountenanced by the British, and the purchase of slaves so taken was prohibited. This was successful in removing a great inducement to predatory expeditions, which were generally attended with bloodshed. It was, however, accompanied by a melancholy circumstance. "A Caribi chief, indignant at the refusal of the governor to accept of a fine slave, immediately dashed out the brains of the slave, and declared that for the future his nation should never give quarter."<sup>1</sup>

"The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

<sup>1</sup> The usual club of the Caribs is made of the heaviest wood in the forest; it is about eighteen inches long, flat, and square at both ends, but heavier at one end than the other. It is thinner in the middle, and wound round with cotton thread, with a loop to secure it to the wrist. It is called by them "Potu." One blow with this club, in which is sometimes fixed a sharp stone, will scatter the brains. They fix the stone in the future club by sticking it in the tree while it is yet growing; it soon becomes so firm that it cannot be forced out, and in due time the tree is cut and shaped according to the fancy of the Indian. This latter kind is, however, seldom met with, and the weapon is sufficiently formidable when made of wood alone.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WACAWOIOS.

Journey through the Caribi country to a Wacawoio settlement—  
Reception and results of the visit—Description of the Wacawoios—  
Their persons, ornaments, and treacherous character—The blow-  
pipe and worali, or arrow poison—The haiarri, and method of  
poisoning fish—Their roving disposition, and long journeys for  
traffic and plunder—The small-pox—State of the Indian Mission in  
1842.

It is gratifying to turn from the horrors of former savage warfare, to consider the progress of the gospel of the Prince of Peace ; whose holy doctrines can induce the savage to commit his war-club to the flames, and will, when fully obeyed, cause the civilized nations of the earth to “learn war” no more.

The two tribes, the Arawâk and Caribi, continued to meet at the mission on the most friendly terms, and their lodging-places formed a small village along the bank of the river. The settlements of each tribe were occasionally visited ; those of the Caribs the more frequently, as they were the least advanced.

On one of these occasions, we discovered, at a landing-place on the bank of the river, one of those beautifully spotted, but destructive animals which infest the country. It was apparently approaching the water to drink, and as the canoe ran ashore, it



placed itself on a fallen tree, where it stood with its brilliant eyes fixed upon one of the lads, who went forward with his paddle to drive it away. It was not till the number of its assailants had increased that it retreated ; which it did with a light and agile motion, of which those who have seen those animals only in confinement can have but little idea. It was small, and probably young.

The Caribs on the Issorora continued to show every willingness to receive Christian instruction ; and at Pegassa, where we usually took up our quarters for the night, the people who assembled for evening prayers would sit for a long time afterwards, listening to the word of life, which was interpreted by one of their countrymen. On one of these occasions the scene was very impressive. Our place of meeting was a small area in the centre of the village, where the white sandy soil was kept perfectly free from weeds. Here, with the bright tropical moon over head, sat, or squatted, a group of half-naked people in every attitude of attention, listening with eagerness to the “good word.” It was indeed a scene of beauty, from the various kinds of trees and shrubs seen in the clear moonlight, while the solemn stillness, unbroken, save by the low chirping of various insects, made it seem as if nature was hushed to hear of the sufferings of her Lord.

The children, who were so alarmed at my first appearance among them, had long since got over their fright, and some were attendants at the Mission School.



From this place I set out one morning, under the escort of Yan and one or two other Caribs, it being our intention to visit every settlement in that quarter. The presence of these guides ensured a good reception at every place we came to, and our company gradually increased, till at last we had about twelve fine-looking men in our train. In the more remote settlements there was not a shirt, frock, or other European garment to be seen : the people all looked wild and careless, being perfectly satisfied with their condition. The stream becoming less as we ascended it, further progress was only practicable in a very small canoe, which would scarcely hold three persons. Our companions went along a foot-path, being frequently lost to sight for a time, and then were seen emerging from the forest and crossing the stream before us on fallen trees, which form the usual bridges of the Indians. Some of these the canoe must be hauled over, and others it passes under, the people inside lying down to avoid coming in contact with them. At last we quitted the river, and proceeded through a very marshy forest. They told me that we had passed all the Caribi settlements, and were now entering the country of the Wacawoios.

Having expressed a wish to proceed, they agreed to conduct me to a settlement called Konosa. As we drew near it, twelve or thirteen dogs, which heard our approaching footsteps, came rushing down the path, and made directly at me, as the most unusual object, but were driven back by the paddles of the Caribs, who ran forward to my assistance. The settlement

we found to be in great confusion. There were an equal number of other dogs seated on a long rude table, each being tied to a stout bar of wood fastened to the posts of the house. The Wacawoio woman was busy in endeavouring to catch those which were loose, and tie them up in like manner, to keep them from her guests. Most of these were growling and snarling with all their might, and all the efforts of the woman to restore order were ineffectual, until she had chastised the most noisy with a long switch.

In answer to my inquiries, the Caribs told me that the master of the settlement carried on a traffic with these animals, which were of an excellent hunting breed. He soon made his appearance, and saluted me in the Creole Dutch.

Yan then entered into a long conversation with him, and at my desire explained the little he had learned himself: told him of the intentions of some of the Caribs to learn the good word of God: and asked him to come with his family to the mission; as people of *all nations* were called by the Son of God. The old man listened with great attention to our Caribi friend, who was simple-minded and earnest, and prevailed with him to give his consent. I was myself perfectly useless in the conference, from ignorance of their tongue.

After this we were invited to take some refreshment; and as there was no meat to be obtained until the young men came from hunting, cassava bread was set before us, with a sauce made of the casareep or boiled cassava juice, to which a quantity

of red pepper is added. I had frequently partaken of a similar preparation, but never anything equal to this. The Caribs ate of it with impunity, though it was sufficient to excoriate the mouth of any other person than an Indian.

A few weeks after my return to the Mission, the Wacawoio family from Konosa commenced attendance there, with most of the Caribs from Issorora.

Near the sources of the Pomeroon there were some settlements of the Wacawoios, whom we were preparing to visit, though with little hope of inducing them to attend, from the very great distance. They soon, however, quitted their abode, so as to be able to attend the Missions of the Essequibo, to which they were much nearer than to ours. Their neighbours informed us of this, and the welcome intelligence prevented our intended visit.

In person and stature the Wacawoios resemble the other tribes, but they may be recognised by their peculiar physiognomy, and the manner in which they contrive to adorn, or rather disfigure, their features, which are not unpleasing, though grave and somewhat melancholy. They use the arnotto, and also paint their faces and bodies with blue streaks, in which they take great pains. They wear a piece of wood or a quill stuck through the cartilage of the nose, and some individuals have similar ornaments through the lobe of the ear. They formerly distinguished themselves by a circular hole, about half an inch in diameter, made in the lower part of the under lip, in which was inserted a piece of wood of equal

size with the hole, which was cut off almost even with the outer skin, the inner end pressing against the roots of the teeth. This latter ornament is now but seldom seen, but the others are general.

The Wacawoios are dreaded by the other tribes on account of their predatory disposition, and for their treachery. They are said to be addicted to poisoning, and to possess the art of preparing the most pernicious compositions, some of which produce slow but inevitable death. These they are accused of administering in food and drink, pretending, at the same time, friendship and regard for the unsuspecting victim. It has been said that they will drink first themselves to obviate suspicion, and then secretly drop the poison, ready concealed under their nails, into the liquor, as they hand it to the person whom they intend to destroy. It has been also said that they plant envenomed spikes in the paths leading to their habitations, leaving one free, which they use themselves, and make known by private marks to their countrymen. I have met with no instances of the kind, but have often heard their general treachery spoken of by others, who are very careful of offending any individual of this tribe.

Such is the character they have ever borne : and if it be true, as was suspected, that the death of that zealous missionary, the late Mr. Youd, was accelerated or brought on by poison thrice administered by a Wacawoio, these reports, so injurious to their character, would be greatly confirmed.

Of the deadly effects of the worali, or arrow poison,

which they, in common with others, generally use, there can be no manner of doubt : it is well known, and its deadly effects have been too often tested. The arrows used for this purpose are about one foot in length, and very slender ; one end is sharpened, and envenomed with the worali, and around the other is wound a ball of fleecy cotton, adapted to the size of the cavity of the blow-pipe through which it is to be discharged. This blow-pipe is a reed, or small kind of palm, about nine feet in length, and perfectly straight, which is hollowed and lined with another smooth reed. The Indians are very careful of these, and frequently turn them when placed in their houses, lest they should become in the slightest degree bent or warped, by remaining in one position. They frequently cover them with handsome "pegall" work, and sell them as curiosities to the colonists.

The small poisoned arrows are, by a single blast from the lungs, sent through the cavity of the reed, and fly for some distance with great swiftness and accurate aim, conveying speedy and certain death. The tribes which use these weapons are accustomed to them from their infancy, and by long practice they acquire a degree of dexterity which is inimitable by Europeans, and would be incredible, were it not for the fact that they depend upon them for most of their animal food. As an Indian said to one of our countrymen, "The blow-pipe is our gun, and the poisoned arrow is our powder and shot."

The worali is said to be fatal when it has mixed with the blood in the smallest degree, but to have



no poisonous effect on an unbroken skin. The animals killed with it appear to suffer no violent pain, though slight convulsions sometimes occur as they expire. It does not affect the flesh, which is perfectly good for food.

Many attempts have been made to discover the secret of its composition, but without any very satisfactory result. The Macusi tribe, from whom the strongest sort is obtained, are said to keep the mode of preparing it a profound secret. It is called "worali," from the name of a nibbi or bush-rope, the juice of which is one of the chief ingredients.

The Wacawoios also supply the coast tribes with considerable quantities of the haiarri root, which is used in poisoning fish. These roots are usually cut in pieces about two feet in length, and tied up in small bundles, which have a powerful and disagreeable scent. Some of these pieces, bruised till the fibres separate, and then washed in a small stream, at the turn of the tide, when there is little or no current, will cause the fish to rise to the surface apparently intoxicated, and gasping. In a few minutes they float motionless, and the larger kinds are shot with barbed arrows, while the smaller ones are struck with knives previously to their being taken out of the water. This is done to save trouble, as they might revive if a heavy shower of rain were suddenly to fall, or fresh water to reach them. The fish so taken are perfectly wholesome ;—perhaps the action of fire has some effect in destroying any noxious quality which these poisons may possess, as



in the well-known instance of the juice of the cassava.

The Wacawoios also carry on a traffic in many other things ; and they have been called, from their roving propensities, the pedlars and news-carriers of the whole eastern coast. They are in constant communication with the inhabitants of Venezuela and the Brazils, as well as with the colonists of Demerara, Surinam, and Cayenne.

Notwithstanding this roving disposition, they are attentive to agriculture, and are said to cultivate more land than any other tribe ; that they may have not only a supply of provisions for themselves, but for any other party who may chance to call ; the rules of hospitality being strictly observed. But after they have planted their fields, and prepared their warlike implements, they sell whatever articles they may have on hand, and with a supply of English goods, and as many fire-arms as they can muster, they set off to the Venezuelan or Brazilian frontiers to barter them there for other articles. Of the nature of these expeditions, the following account has been given by one who was well acquainted with the habits of this tribe.

“ In these expeditions, in which several families join, their chief care is to provide a good stock of bread ; they then march for three days, and halt for two, during which they hunt, and barbacote or dry their game ; and they are in no distress for provisions, for even two or three months, which is frequently the duration of their journeys.

“In these marches, when they approach a village, it signifies not of what nation, they prepare to attack it. If it be on the alert, and strong enough to resist, they conclude a treaty of commerce, eat together, and trade, without reserve or suspicion ; but if the place be weak, and the inhabitants off their guard, those who resist are instantly massacred, and the remainder become slaves to the victors.

“Their audacity in these predatory excursions is astonishing. If a party can muster eight or ten stand of fire-arms, it will fight its way through all the mountain tribes, though at open war with them, and by the rapidity of their marches, and nightly enterprises, which they call Kanaima, they conceal the weakness of their numbers, and carry terror before them.”<sup>1</sup>

It has been judged necessary to give this brief account of the habits of the Wacawoios, for though few of them have attended our Missions, compared with the other tribes, yet they have influenced them more than once in a remarkable manner, as will hereafter appear.

The Wacawoios from Konosa continued to attend the Pomeroon Mission until their settlement was visited by a fatal epidemic, to which the principal persons fell victims ; the others then quitted their abode for the distant settlements of their tribe, a few individuals only visiting us occasionally.

The small-pox committed fearful ravages among the Caribs, who suffered more than any other tribe.

<sup>1</sup> Hillhouse, from Martin's West Indies, pp. 43, 44.

Their settlements, Borowai, Tonambo, Pegassa, and others, whose neat and flourishing appearance had excited my admiration, now became the abodes of sickness and death, of misery and sorrow. It is impossible to state the number of deaths in proportion to the whole population, but it was very considerable.

Among the settlers several sad tales were current respecting events connected with this visitation; some of which I believe to be too true. It was said that at a settlement where many had died, a young stranger, who was attacked by the disease, had been left to perish; none daring to approach him with a draught of water. Others represented them as setting fire to the habitation where a person had died, and burning the corpse within it. Not having witnessed these things, I cannot vouch for their truth; but the reports had doubtless some foundation, and showed how severe the affliction was.

Great anxiety was felt lest the small-pox should visit the Mission. It was not long before it did so, making its appearance among the negro family, which had greatly increased in number. The Indian children were immediately dismissed, with injunctions to their respective families to avoid the place. On the Sabbath day they were directed to assemble on the opposite bank of the river; they then landed at the chapel, (for which the signal was given by blowing a horn,) and again left without any communication with the infected house. God being merciful to the Arawâks who attended the Mission,

none of them were attacked, though the disease prevailed all round about them.

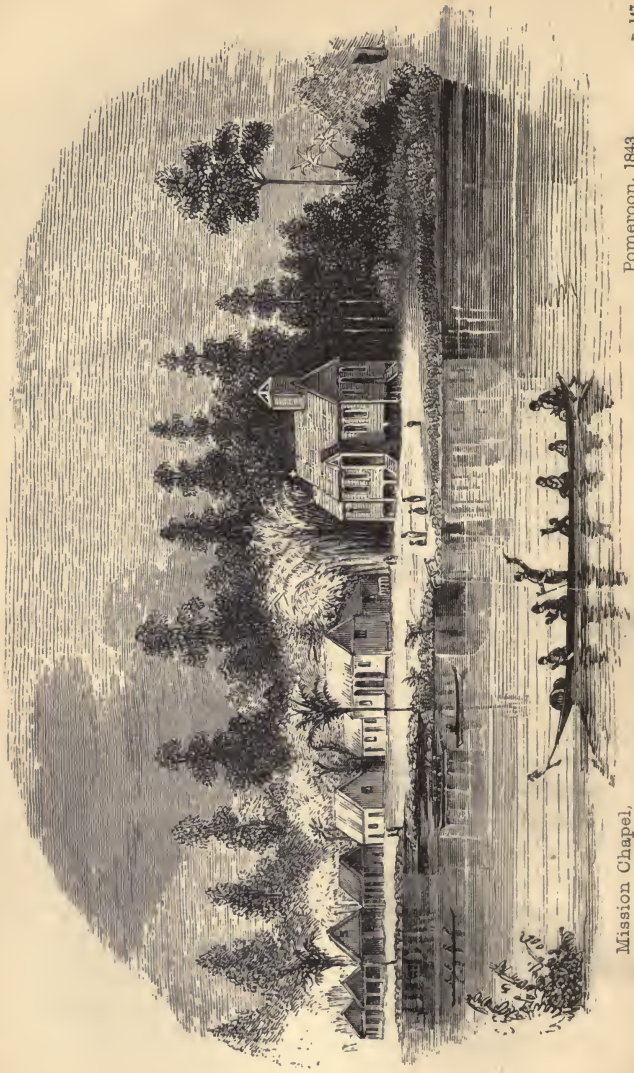
My Indian boy, Ifili, (or David,) positively refused to leave me at this time: though I repeatedly desired him to do so. He faithfully attended me during the tedious weeks, in which the small-pox successively attacked every individual left at the Mission, except himself and me.

Our Mission gradually resumed its former appearance when the fear of infection had passed away. A medical gentleman then visited us, who vaccinated the children and adults at the school, and left a supply of the virus to be communicated to others. Most of the Arawâks, on being informed of its properties, gladly availed themselves of the opportunity. An important boon would have been conferred upon the poor Indians, if the government had previously taken measures to have them all vaccinated; which, by means of the post-holders, or officers charged with the protection of the Indian tribes, might easily have been done. It is to these diseases, combined with the occasional drinking of rum to great excess, that the continual decrease of their numbers is to be mainly attributed: since there have been no wars among any of the tribes near the coast for many years.

It was feared that this affliction, operating on the superstitious ideas of the Indians, might have led the Caribs to declare against Christianity as its cause. It is probable that such would have been the case, had not the Arawâks, who were more deeply impli-







Mission Chapel,



cated than themselves, been entirely spared ; which was a providential circumstance, not only in itself, but in its effects. The Caribs soon came again. They had heard of another and a better life ; and the affliction which had befallen them had shown them the painful uncertainty of this, and made them anxious and humble. It was sad to see the disfigured faces of many of them, and how their families had been thinned by the disease. From this time many became very regular in their attendance, and their children at school began to rival those of the Arawâks in number.

The congregation at our little chapel had so increased, that it became necessary to enlarge it. This was done, by workmen from the coast, by the addition of a chancel, porch, &c. It was at the same time raised and placed on stout piles of wood ; a small belfry was added, and the once wretched spot assumed a neat and beautiful appearance when viewed from the river.

Our congregation at that period was of a very mixed character, being composed of people of every shade of colour, and sometimes of six different languages ; the English, Creole Dutch, Arawâk, Caribisi, Wacawoio, and Warau ; some individuals of the latter degraded tribe usually attending on the few remaining settlers. They were sometimes induced to enter the chapel, and could at first with difficulty be prevented from getting in and out of the windows. Sometimes one would place himself on the window-sill, and squatting on his heels, quietly observe all that was going on.

Some of our regular attendants had to paddle themselves eight or nine hours, with their wives, children, food, cooking utensils, clothes, and most of their little property, every time they visited the Mission. An outward change was visible in the conduct of many, especially among the Arawâks, and several drunkards became reformed. I state this, not only as the result of my own observation, but on the testimony of others. A small store for the sale of ardent spirits, which had been opened on the bank of the river opposite the Mission, was closed in the course of the following year.

Among these different tribes and languages the difficulties of the teacher were great. It was, however, most consoling to see so many people waiting with great reverence during the Sabbath service, which being in English was unintelligible to most, until some instruction had been conveyed to them by those who could comprehend a little. The difficulty was, of course, unavoidable; but though painful and trying, it was most gratifying to see people of such various kindreds and tongues assembled, even under great disadvantages, to worship the same Lord and Saviour.

“ All nations shall do Him service.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LOWER DISTRICT OF POMEROON.

Nature of the District—Missionary Expedition to the Manawarin and Wakapoa ; its results—Maquarri dance of the Arawâks—Difficulties among these people—Better prospects—Caribs in Manawarin erect a rude place of worship—Attendance at Caledonia.

ON the banks of the Pomeroon, a few miles from its mouth, there are seven plantations of various sizes, on which plantains and coffee are cultivated by a population of about 300 persons, chiefly negroes, by whom about half of the property in the district has been purchased.

One of these small estates, called Hackney, was purchased by the late Rev. J. H. Duke for the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*. A chapel school, with a residence for the teacher, had been erected there, but it was in a decaying state, and soon after fell to pieces, having been destroyed by the wood-ants, which, in Guiana, speedily take possession of every building that may be left for a short time without the watchful care of man.

In the beginning of 1842, Mr. W. T. Smithett was

sent out by the *Society* to take charge of this negro district, and to cooperate, as far as possible, in the Indian field of labour. The building at Hackney being untenable, he took up his abode on the next estate, Caledonia ; the manager of which, Mr. Gainfort, kindly allowed the use of a substantial building, (formerly used for cleaning cotton,) for the performance of Divine Service.

As soon as Mr. Smithett had got the negro congregation in order, it was arranged that we should, in company, visit the Wakapoa, a district, inhabited by Arawâks, lying between the Pomeroon and the Moruca. Some months before, Cornelius and his family having visited some of his friends in that part, found that they refused to eat with them, or to touch food of which they had partaken. On asking the reason of this scornful treatment, the heathen said, “ We hear that you are getting *bad hearts*, and forsaking the ways of our fathers,—we desire no fellowship with such.” On this Cornelius and his party addressed them with convincing arguments, drawn from a comparison of their former with their present state, so that some of the inhabitants of Wakapoa said they would join the Christians. I heard of this circumstance from other parties, and resolved to take Cornelius and his brother-in-law, Thomas, with us as interpreters.

The voyage from the upper Mission to Caledonia takes up the best part of a day. On arriving there, we found an old chief named John, the head of the Caribs of the Manawarin, who expressed himself

willing to receive a visit from us. It was thought that this might prove a good opening for the Word of God among his people, and we therefore resolved to accompany him to his settlement, (though ill prepared for such an expedition,) and to visit the Wakapoa on our return.

It was necessary to cross the sea, and we descended the river for that purpose. Wild mangroves grow near the mouths of these streams, among which the manati, or sea-cow, is sometimes met with. This creature grows to the length of sixteen feet, and is very thick and clumsy in its shape. It has a short head, which it sometimes elevates above the water to feed on the herbage which grows on the banks, supporting its body by two strong pectoral fins, which the female also uses in holding her young. It has no other fins, and the tail is like that of the whale. Though so large, it is harmless and quiet, and its flesh is good for food.

The estuary or bay which extends from Pomeroon to the Moruca was crossed without difficulty, the day being very fine. Near the mouth of the latter stream there are a number of wooden piles standing in the sea, being the remains of an old Dutch fortification, which was attacked by the Spaniards in 1797, who were repulsed with severe loss by a company of Dutch soldiers in British service, commanded by Captain Rochelle. It is said that shot are sometimes found in the earth on the opposite bank, the relics of this engagement.

The Moruca is a very narrow and unpleasant

stream, but valuable as affording a communication with the Waini, Barima, Amacuru, and other large rivers, by which the Orinoco may be reached without venturing on the sea. The Venezuelans carry on a traffic with our colony by this water communication, and their canoes continually pass and repass that way.

We had to take up our quarters for the night on the banks of the Manawarin, and after prayers endeavoured to compose ourselves to sleep. Our shelter was but imperfect, consisting of a small flat roof of manicole leaves, just sufficient to cover two hammocks. The Indians made large fires, and suspended their hammocks between the trees. This is the best protection from wild animals and reptiles which abound in that dense forest. A loud splash was occasionally heard in the water, which the Indians said was occasioned by the plunging of a small alligator.

About midnight it began to rain heavily, and I was soon so wet from the water which dripped through the roof, as to be compelled to rise, and stand till morning. The Indians were likewise wet, and with difficulty managed to shelter one of the fires, so as to keep it from being extinguished. The sound of the heavy dropping of the rain from the leaves and branches was only varied by the occasional falling of some large seed-pod from the tall trees. All seemed uncomfortable, except my friend, who still slept on, and Thomas, who had contrived to fix one of our umbrellas over his hammock so as to keep his body



dry. A little negro boy had been admitted to share this shelter, and lay in the hammock fast asleep, with his black woolly head on the red bosom of the good-natured Indian.

The next day we passed through a district inhabited by about 100 Waraus, several of whom we visited, but met with no success. They listened with perfect indifference to all we said, and were most importunate beggars.

Very different was the reception we experienced at the dwelling of the old Caribi chief, who seemed to consider our visit as a great honour. He introduced us to his two sons, and to several of his tribe, promising to use all his influence to induce them to listen to Christian teaching. He would doubtless have done so had he lived ; but the hand of death was even then overshadowing himself and many of his people. The small-pox soon came upon them, and destroyed many, dispersing the survivors in terror all over the country for a time.

At a Warau settlement which we visited, we found a poor girl who had been dreadfully burnt some time before, the fire having caught her hammock while she slept. She was in a shocking state, and it was evident that the Indian remedies were only increasing her sufferings. We offered to procure medical assistance, if her family would remove her to the coast. She seemed a very meek and patient child, and her look of gratitude for our sympathy was most affecting. Her friends, however, took no trouble about her, and she probably died soon after.

On our return, being anxious to reach our stations before the Sabbath, we ventured to cross the sea soon after midnight, the weather being fine, though the night was dark. By the Divine protection we reached Pomeroon in safety, though wet with the sea-water, and waited shivering till day-light enabled us to ascend the Wakapoa. Accidents frequently occur on the sea at this place ; a few months later, a canoe much larger than ours was swamped, and a settler named Stoll, and several Indians, were drowned, while attempting to cross it during the night,

The entrance to the Wakapoa is very narrow, but after proceeding a few miles, through many impediments from trees, which have fallen from the banks into the stream, and remain fixed by their branches to the bottom, we at length reached a scene of great beauty, having an extensive prospect across a savannah. Through this flows a deep stream, which, overflowing its banks during many months of the year, forms a beautiful lake, adorned with clumps of the eta palm, and several islands. A similar stream enters it from a savannah on the right hand, called Koraia.

Having ascended the Wakapoa, we went direct to the habitation of the chief of the district, an infirm old Arawâk named Sabaiko. After such remarks as my limited acquaintance with their language enabled me to make (the old man understanding but little English), Cornelius addressed him. He is the most eloquent speaker I have known among the Indians

of his tribe ; and we listened with silence and pleasure to his words. After giving such an account of Christianity as he was able, he spoke of the advantages, even in a temporal point of view, which attend its reception ;—then of the love of the Son of God ;—thence he adverted to the affection displayed by his disciples in England, and others, in sending to convert the heathen ; then pointing towards us, “Father,” said he, “these young men crossed the sea at midnight to visit you, because they loved you ; we came with them willingly, because we loved them.” (This was indeed true ; and notwithstanding their broken rest and labour during the previous night, they continued paddling till a late hour in the evening, being as anxious for the propagation of the Gospel of Christ as ourselves.) The old man seemed moved, and promised to tell his people when they returned, most of them being absent. We left him, after prayer according to our custom, and returned to our separate stations.

Our visit to Wakapoa having produced no good effect, we repeated it after some weeks, but with similar results. On this occasion the old chief’s wife made her appearance with what seemed at a distance to be a singular head-dress ; but proved to be a young “baboon” or red monkey, which she carried in this manner, its feet being placed on her shoulders, and its grinning visage resting on its fore-paws upon her forehead. The Indian women take great care of various young animals, even suckling them as if they were their children. This disgusting practice is not

confined to any one tribe, nor indeed to the Indian females alone.

We visited this district many times, but with little good effect. Most of the young men of the different settlements had been draughted to accompany the military expedition to Pirara, and returned much worse disposed than they were before. Some families were there who had lived on the Demerara, and were remarkable for drunkenness.

On one occasion I visited the Wakapoa alone ; Mr. Smithett being prevented from going by indisposition. On arriving there, I found that the people had all gone to the Koraia, where there was a great Maquarri dance. We arrived at the place of festivity in the afternoon, being guided by the shouts of the people there assembled. The scene surpassed in singularity all that I had previously heard or seen of Indian life. The young men and boys were ranged in two parallel rows, facing each other, each holding in his right hand the Maquarri, from which the dance takes its name.

This is a whip, made of the silk grass, more than three feet long, and capable of giving a severe cut, as their bleeding legs amply testified. They waved these whips in their hands as they danced, uttering alternate cries, which resembled the note of a certain bird often heard in these forests. At some little distance from the dancers, were couples of men lashing each other on the leg. The man whose turn it was to receive the lash, stood firmly on one leg, advancing the other ; while his adversary, stooping, took de-





Maquarri Dance



liberate aim, and springing from the earth to add vigour to his stroke, gave his opponent a severe cut. He never shrunk, nor gave other sign that he was hurt, than by a contemptuous smile, though blood might have been drawn by the lash, which, after a short dance, was returned with equal force. Nothing could exceed the good humour with which these proceedings were carried on. It is expected of every man (except the aged) to join in this contest. One of them was scarcely able to walk from the punishment he had received; but in general, after a few lashes, they drank *paiwari* together, and returned to the main body of the dancers, from which fresh couples were continually falling out to engage in the same contest.

The old chief, Sabaiko, met and saluted me in a friendly manner; then seated himself in the house to view the proceedings of his people. He was dressed in European clothing, and had suspended round his neck the silver plate which marked his chieftainship; and bore a silver-headed staff in his hand. Some of his people wore shirts, &c., combined in a singular manner with the ornaments of their native costume. I am sorry to add that most of them were in different stages of intoxication. One of them came up to me, and abruptly demanded "if their dance was not very good?" It being absurd to enter into any argument with a drunken person, I said, "that to-morrow I would tell him," with which answer he seemed quite satisfied, and soon resumed his place as one of the wildest of the throng.

This dance was given in honour of a deceased female who had been buried in the house. A wide plank lay on her grave, and on this were placed two bundles, containing the refuse of the silk grass of which the whips were made, which had been carefully preserved; there were also two pieces of wood, rudely carved to resemble birds, and two others which were intended to represent infants. At a signal from the master of the house the dancing ceased; and all the men arranging themselves in procession, went round the house with slow and measured steps, the plank and wooden images being carried before them. After this they arranged themselves near the grave, and one of them chanted something in a low voice, to which the others answered at intervals with four moans, by way of chorus. The articles carried in procession were then taken to a hole previously dug in the earth, and buried there. Two or three men appointed for the purpose, then drew forth their long knives, and rushing in among the dancers, snatched the whips from them, cut off the lash from each, and buried them with the other articles. It seemed to be a point of etiquette not to resign the whips without a struggle, and while the one party were snatching and cutting, the others were leaping and throwing somersets to avoid them, and it was surprising that none of them received any injury amid the confusion.

After an interval of rest, twelve of the young men came forward to engage in another kind of dance, called Owiarri. These performers carried rods about

twelve feet in length, on the top of which were fixed small gourds with stones in them, and decorated with streamers of silk grass, painted red. They ranged themselves in parallel rows as before, and danced backwards and forwards, striking the ends of their rods upon the earth, and keeping time with the clash. Some young women went up to these dancers from time to time, and taking them by the arm danced with them ; then at a signal given by their partners, who shook the coverings of beetles' wings and other ornaments with which their legs were adorned, they ran off to their companions like frightened deer.

Two canoes full of paiwari had been made for the occasion, and as these were now exhausted, the spirits of the company began to flag. I slept at a house at some little distance from the scene of the revels, and as the noise of the drunken orgies by degrees died away, the moon rose in all the soft beauty of a tropical night ; and the stillness which pervaded all nature formed a striking contrast to the noise and turbulence which had marked the day.

The next day, the visitors from the Wakapoa arose early and went to their canoes, in hopes to avoid meeting me. On sending a request for them to return, they replied, " that if I wished to speak with them I must go to them." On hastening to the water-side, I found about fifty people present, who were all seated in their canoes about to start ; and when I spoke to them they listened in gloomy

silence, and without turning their heads towards me. Sabaiko then said, "I have no power over my people; myself and a few will *hear*, but most of them are unwilling."

Returning to the scene of the preceding day's festivity, I found that headaches and sore legs were abundant, and received many applications for remedies. Under the influence of present feelings, some of them acknowledged that their dances were very bad, and said they would forsake them, and put themselves under Mr. Smithett's instructions;—good resolutions, which with most abated as their illness went off and their legs became well.

These dances had been often mentioned to me, but as our own people had discontinued them, I had given up all expectation of witnessing one. I was particularly surprised at their indifference to pain, which they said was owing in a great measure to the *paiwari* and the presence of the women, who sit by as spectators of their powers of endurance. This dance was given by one of the men in honour of his sister who had been dead many months; her husband was present, and I was told that after the dance, his connexion with her family would entirely cease. Some have supposed that these dances were connected with the giving in marriage of some young female, and that contending rivals settled their claims with the *Maquarri*; but this I am unable to decide, though it is not exclusively a funeral game. With respect to the images I could learn nothing: they were ceremonies derived from their ancestors,

but they seemed to have lost their original meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Smithett and myself on returning soon after, found a better disposition in many of these people. Some of them seemed inclined to accept the offered love of God, and to follow his Son as their Saviour and Lord.

On another occasion, not being able to discover the path leading to one of their settlements, we crossed the swamp, and found ourselves in an unpleasant position; the crust of the quagmire, which was hardened by the sun, being in most places sufficient to bear our weight, but in some parts very thin and giving way beneath our feet. We soon sunk deep at every step, and I received a wound in the sole of my foot, by a splinter from a tree which was imbedded beneath the surface. This confined me to my hammock for two days. Mr. Smithett got safely across, though he sunk in the mud very deeply at one spot. On our return the Indians led us across the swamp by another path, which was formed of a layer of trooly leaves, and was perfectly safe.

In returning, we saw a young alligator asleep

<sup>1</sup> I have not seen among other tribes anything similar to the Maquarri, the institution of which seems to bear a faint resemblance to the funeral games of classic antiquity. It is also the nearest approach, observable among the Indians, to the friendly contests practised in Europe during the ages of chivalry. Though sufficiently barbarous, it is by no means to be compared to our own brutal prize-fights, or to pugilistic contests in general. And it would be a great benefit to the obstinate duellists of Europe and America, and especially to their unfortunate families, were the Maquarri to supersede among them the use of sword and pistol, rifle and bowie-knife.



on the surface of the water, which one of our Indians struck with a paddle, and placed in the hinder part of the canoe, thinking it to be dead. It soon revived, and as it began to move, the two lads who were sitting on the seat just over it, nearly overturned us in their hurry to escape. Having its head towards the pointed stern, it began to move up towards the steersman, who hastily threw one of his feet over each side of the canoe, and was preparing to slip into the stream, when the alligator, instinctively perceiving that by ascending it would not find the water, turned round, and began to run forwards, when its skull was fractured by a blow from the blade of a paddle, which prevented the little reptile from further mischief.

On another occasion, while descending the narrow gorge or outlet of the Wakapoa, we were carried by the velocity of the current upon one of those dangerous stumps, (called *snags* on the rivers of the United States,) which brought us up with great violence; and the canoe, after quivering for a few seconds, fell broadside into the water. She providentially righted; but had taken in much water, and we were in a state of great anxiety lest the bottom should have been pierced: this, however, was not the case, or the consequences, in that intricate and rapid stream, must have been very unpleasant, and perhaps fatal to some of us.

Mr. Smithett, who was most indefatigable in his labours, succeeded, during a visit of nine days, in inducing about thirty Indians to commence atten-



dance at Caledonia : and there was at length every prospect of success following much disappointment, among the Arawâks of the Wakapoa.

In the Manawarin, among the Caribs, the prospect was even more cheering. The old chief John had been succeeded in his office by his son Peter, who, with all his family, had nearly lost his life with the small-pox. He was a man in the prime of life, low in stature, but athletic, and with a countenance expressive of an open, straightforward character. His first act was to assemble his people, and construct a large building on a hill called Wasiba ; to be used as a place of worship when the missionaries might visit their river. This building was used for that purpose more than once, both by Mr. Smithett and myself ; and was known among the Indians by the name of “Captain Peter’s Church.” More than one hundred Caribs sometimes assembled there.

The great drawback to the formation of an Indian Mission at Hackney, Caledonia, or the neighbouring estates, was the annoyance experienced from the musquitos, for which that district is notorious ; and which are numerous and annoying to a degree which in England can scarcely be comprehended. A faithful description of the plague of these insects is liable to the charge of exaggeration. The negroes and others fill their houses with smoke in the evenings, to drive them out ; a remedy which is almost as bad as the evil which it is designed to counteract.—The Indians avoid fixing their habitations in the neigh-

bourhood of the sea, where these insects are most abundant.

Notwithstanding this, the Arawâks from the Wakapoa, and occasionally a few Caribs from Manawarin, endured this annoyance for one or two nights in the week, taking shelter among the negroes or in any shed which they could find vacant ; their attendance being encouraged by the manager of Caledonia.

Mr. Smithett had thus the satisfaction of seeing a year of labour close with a prospect of spiritual good among these people, brighter than could at one period have been expected.

“ Though it tarry, wait for it.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE WARAUS.

Visit of Irai, the Caribi chief—The Bishop of Guiana visits the Missions—Removal of the Upper Mission to the Hill—Character and habits of the Waraus—Unsuccessful efforts among them—Surprising change—Another Mission for their benefit commenced—Mr. Nowers appointed—Exertions of the Post-holder and the Indians.

DURING the period in which the events recorded in the last chapter took place, the two districts were visited by the Rev. C. Haskins, for the purpose of administering the Holy Sacraments. Such opportunities were highly valued.

In October 1842, Irai (or Erie), the young Caribi chief whom I had formerly seen in company with Mr. Youd, was brought to Pomeroon by the Rev. J. H. Bernau. I met the party near the Tapacuma Lake, and they arrived the next day at our Mission.

Mr. Bernau having preached at the chapel to an attentive congregation, we proceeded on the following morning to Carawob, where it had been resolved to hold a meeting of the Caribs. About eighty of that tribe assembled, many of whom had been at church the previous day. Towards evening Irai began addressing them on the object of our visit, and as he possessed considerable eloquence, they listened with much attention to the words of their native tongue

from the lips of a descendant of their great chief, Mahanarva, whose visit seemed to produce a good effect ; though as Commodore, the chief of Pomeroon, with his family and many of his people, had been brought under Christian instruction for more than a year, they could not then have said (as formerly they might) "None careth for us."

Four months after this event, the Bishop of Guiana, who had lately arrived in his diocese, visited the Missions. The particulars of this visit are related in the Journal of his Lordship's chaplain.

After describing the scenery of the Tapacuma, and giving an account of an adventure with a large snake, which was struck by one of the Indians with his paddle, as it lay asleep on a branch overhanging the stream, and escaped by dropping itself into the water, the writer proceeds :—

"To return to our narrative : a large assemblage of Indians was formed at " the Mission, "about two hundred Arawâks and Caribs ; who crowded around, and seemed highly gratified at the visit of the Bishop. At evening prayer, Mr. Brett's house was crowded to overflowing, and all exhibited a marked and reverential deportment. The chapel is a neat little building, and with the Mission-house and Indian cottages forms a pleasing picture."

In this district forty Indians and others were confirmed, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered to forty. At Caledonia the Bishop confirmed thirty-two persons, and administered the Lord's Supper to about forty. "This ended the

Bishop's route ; and the next morning he returned on his way home, expressing great satisfaction at the flourishing state of the Missions, and full of hope as respects the rapid spread of the gospel among an interesting, and till lately much neglected people."<sup>1</sup>

Much benefit to the Indians resulted from this visit of the Bishop ; who, after admitting their teacher into holy orders, purchased a fine hill for the Mission settlement, about a mile higher up the river than the site of the chapel. On this spot there were standing two buildings of wood, one of which was new roofed by the Indians, and became the residence of the Missionary ; the other forming an excellent school-house. In the course of two months the former site of the Mission was deserted, except on the Sabbath, when the river was covered with canoes proceeding to and from the house of God.

It was not without a feeling of regret that a place endeared by so many interesting associations could be quitted, although the new place of residence was every way to be preferred for health and comfort. It soon became a beautiful spot. The most prominent object is a silk-cotton tree, which may certainly be termed the giant of the woods, as it far surpasses in size and beauty every other tree which I have seen. The foliage hangs around it in beautiful luxuriance, and numerous parasitical plants cover its branches, and entwine its trunk.

The Indian name of this spot is Kabakaburi ; but it is more generally called by the settlers, "the Hill,"

(1) Annual Report of S. P. G. 1843.

as it is the first hill met with on the banks of the river. It was formerly an Arawâk settlement; and the people of that tribe looked with joy on its acquisition. A large village soon sprung up, one half of which was erected by the Arawâks, and the other by the Caribs, who here dwelt together in Christian peace and friendship. They began to put up their houses in irregular clusters, and so close together, that all must have been destroyed if one caught fire. I was obliged to interfere, and lay out the village on a regular plan; the advantage of which was soon perceived by them. Notwithstanding this, it appeared broken into detached portions by beautiful masses of the tall and feather-like bamboos; while the cocoa-nut and paripi palms—the bread-nut, mango, orange, lime, guava, and other trees, “pleasant to the sight or good for food,” added to the beauty of the settlement by their varied shapes and foliage.

A scene of more tranquil happiness than this Mission presented during the next four years, might perhaps have been sought in vain throughout the world. The greatest interruption to this even course arose from my frequent missionary expeditions. During one of these, serious irregularities took place, the young Indians having no one to overlook them. Three offenders were dismissed; and black people, who had been the principal cause of the evil, were forbidden to stay at the Mission. To obviate the recurrence of these things, it seemed best to appoint an Indian to take charge of the scholars at all times, and to teach them during my absence. For this







Caribi Encampment on the Upper Pomeroon.

purpose I made choice of Thomas, who was the only adult able to teach the junior classes, and whose conduct was exemplary in that station, while his wife proved a valuable help to the Mission in many ways.

Mr. Smithett left Pomeroon in 1843, for a station at the mouth of the Corentyn, at the other extremity of the colony. His departure was much regretted both by myself and the people. Both stations then fell under my charge ; the appointment of Mr. D. Campbell soon after as Catechist to the negro district, being a great assistance.

The Caribs of the Upper Pomeroon kept aloof from the Mission. Unlike their brethren, though often visited, they showed no disposition to listen to the Gospel of truth. We had succeeded in inducing one of these families to attend Divine service, and to put two children to school,—a boy and a girl. Both these were in a state of nudity, and it was impossible to introduce them to the school in that condition. I clothed the boy, but had no apparel for the girl. On mentioning the case to the Arawâk children, one of the girls immediately ran to her pegall (or basket), took out her second frock, and clothed the little stranger, though of a different tribe. When the unprincipled Caribi family found that their children had obtained some clothing, they took them away with the garments which had been given to them, and brought them back no more.

The small-pox in its late ravages had desolated some of the settlements in their district. At one place I had counted sixteen persons, among whom

were eight handsome youths just approaching manhood. Nearly the whole of these had perished. It is scarcely possible to describe the effects of these periodical scourges, which are little noticed, except by the missionaries, and in the reports of the post-holders to the colonial government.

The majority of these Caribs of the Upper Pomeeroon were ignorant of English, and influenced by one of their number, who had acquired a knowledge of our tongue, and acted in opposition to the old chief, Commodore, who was wanting in energy. On visiting this man, I found him to be a handsome and intelligent person. He was living in the barbarous style of his uncivilized brethren; but was to me very civil in his language, though perfectly indifferent to the great object in view. He sought to escape from the subject, and at last cut it short by rising from his stool, and asking me to go with him to see a large king of the vultures which he had captured. It was indeed a splendid bird, and of large size; but it was hardly possible to go very near it on account of the odour of a number of putrifying fish given it for food, over which it spread and flapped its wings, anticipating the future banquet. The head of this beautiful bird, destitute of feathers, but shaded with delicate tints of pink and orange, and set off with brilliant pearl-coloured eyes, seemed, together with the ruff round its neck and its other plumage, to call forth the admiration of my host; but he could see in the Lord Jesus and his religion nothing to desire. He promised to visit the Mission; but broke his word.

Other visits seemed productive of no effect among the Caribs of this district; though we had gained over the chiefs of Pomeroon and Manawarin, and half their tribe, many of whom attended regularly.

Matters being in this condition, the state of the *Waraus* became a subject of deep reflection and earnest solicitude.

The situation and condition of this tribe have been already mentioned. They have always been considered as the most despicable of the coast tribes of Guiana. In person they are well made and strong, and capable of great exertions; but they are generally very careless of their personal appearance, and their filthiness is proverbial. They care so little for clothing, that even their females frequently content themselves with a small piece of the bark of a tree, or the net-like covering of the young leaf of the cocoa-nut or cabbage-palm; and their appearance is squalid and peculiarly disagreeable. Many of the young persons of this tribe possess very good features; which I have once or twice seen disfigured by a thin piece of silver, suspended from the cartilage of the nostrils, and covering the upper lip.

As they so seldom cover their bodies, their skins are darker than those of the other tribes. It has been said, that it is difficult at times to distinguish the Warau from the negro; but this is incorrect: from continual exposure and want of cleanliness their skins are somewhat darker than those of other Indians, but that is all.

Though careless to the last degree, and averse to

continuous employment, yet no Indians are so much sought after as labourers. When they can be induced to begin, they will do more work than others, and are satisfied with less wages.

They inhabit the swampy district so often mentioned, and, being near the sea, are excellent fishermen, and subsist much upon the productions of the waters. They cultivate cassava and other vegetables, but do not pay sufficient attention to agriculture, and in times of scarcity betake themselves to the eta palms, which abound in the swamps. The fruit of the eta is round, and grows in large clusters. It is a hard nut, containing a kernel, and covered with an orange-coloured pulp, of which they are fond. This tree is of the greatest service to them: they make of its pith a substitute for bread, while its trunk is sometimes used in flooring their dwellings, and its leaf supplies the fibrous material of which, among other useful things, they make strong and serviceable hammocks, which form an important article in their little traffic.

They are also noted for making canoes, with which they supply the whole colony, the Arawâks sometimes undertaking long voyages to their remote settlements, and bringing the canoes, to be again sold to the settlers, or disposed of among themselves. The canoe, or woibaka, as it is called by the Waraus, is most excellently adapted to the wants of the Indians, though shaped and hollowed with rude implements and without any assistance from the rules of art. Some of them used by the Spaniards



are said to have been known to carry one hundred men and a three-pounder;<sup>1</sup> but the largest that I have seen within the British boundaries could not have conveniently carried more than fifty persons.

Were the Waraus more careful of their gains, and more prompt to avail themselves of advantages, no tribe in Guiana could be in more respectable circumstances; but they have not yet learned to make the slightest provision beyond what absolute necessity requires. If successful in hunting, a scene of excessive gluttony follows, until the game is consumed, and returning hunger forces them to exertion. If unsuccessful, they are capable of enduring great privation. They can also paddle a canoe with greater vigour and for a longer time than the other Indians.

Such are the Waraus, strong and hardy in person, but slovenly and dirty; merry and cheerful in disposition, but careless and improvident.

They are utterly ignorant, and, consequently, very superstitious, their sorcerers being considered to possess greater power over the evil spirits than those of any other tribe. Of all the accessible tribes of Guiana, they alone had kept entirely aloof from Christianity, and it thus became necessary to use the more earnest efforts for their conversion.

The Waraus in Manawarin continued as obdurate as they were when first solicited to embrace the Gospel. After repeated efforts during two years,

<sup>1</sup> M. Martin, p. 50.

finding no change in their disposition, I resolved to try another field of labour, and began to visit a small river in the vicinity, called Haimara-Cabura. Little satisfaction attended the first visit, as the people at the settlement where we took up our quarters were at no pains to conceal their indifference. A fine young fellow had a kind of javelin, the shaft of which was made of a strong reed, in one end of which was inserted a piece of hard wood, forming the point. He continued to hurl this at a mark on the soft stem of a plantain-tree, which was pierced through, the pointed wood remaining firmly fixed in the tree, while the elastic staff flew back towards the man who had cast it. He told me that this was used in striking the morocote and other fine fish; a few seeds, of which they are fond, being scattered on the water, while the Indian watches their rising, and stuns or kills them with this species of dart.

These people paid little or no attention to our evening worship,—did not wish to be taught,—and seemed thoroughly ill-tempered. After we had retired to rest, a child happening to cry, one of the women arose from her hammock, and taking a large piece of firewood, she struck it violently several times as it lay, and then suddenly caught it up and hurled it from her. It fell on the ground, apparently much hurt. I had not witnessed such brutality among the other tribes; but concluded that they were all out of temper because I had brought no rum to give them, for which they were very importunate. The next morning they demanded money

for the shelter they had afforded myself and party,—a thing I had never heard of among the Indians of Guiana.

The Waraus seemed utterly destitute of self-respect. When the advantages which attend the reception of the Gospel were set before them, and the example of the Arawâks was held up for their imitation, no result followed; they were perfectly satisfied to be as they were, acknowledging their inferiority. “God’s Word is good for the Arawâk; not good for the Warau,” was the reply of an old man on one occasion. “We are not so good as the Arawâks,” said he; and when I tried to convince him that “God has made of one blood all nations of men,” and that all are so far equal, he seemed incapable of comprehending the assertion. Two thumbs were then held up to him; and one called an Arawâk and the other a Warau. This Indian method of illustration seemed to strike him at once, and to raise his own nation in his ideas. Still there was no apparent change in the disposition of any person of this tribe, and had it not been for their Caribi neighbours, I should have looked upon the time consumed by each visit as entirely thrown away.

They were thoroughly wedded to their superstitions, and practised them without reserve. On one occasion we passed an old man fishing in a canoe on the Manawarin. The clouds threatened rain, and when he perceived it, he began to use extraordinary gesticulations, flourishing his arms towards it, and shouting his incantations to drive it away. It soon

cleared up, and the old sorcerer rejoiced at his success, as he deemed it.

In the course of another voyage, we passed a Warau similarly engaged in fishing, and apparently so intent upon his pursuit that he could neither observe us passing nor answer our salutation. When we had got a little distance from him, he inquired of the Arawâk who was steering our canoe, whether I had many of the "hebo," or evil spirits, attending me. The answer, "They are entirely wanting," was accompanied by a loud laugh from my crew. It appeared that the Waraus in their ignorance regarded a missionary as a powerful enchanter, and the change in the other tribes as the effect of magic.

These discouragements continued up to the close of 1844. A record of one of these visits made in the October of that year, contains the conviction which was then deeply impressed upon my mind,—  
"all my efforts are of little use."

It is impossible for man to judge ; the Lord alone has power over the hearts of men. While thus recording the utter hopelessness of the case, as it appeared to me, some of these people commenced attending the Caledonia station. An account of this was speedily sent to me by Mr. Campbell, the Catechist there ; and it seemed expedient to visit them without delay. Accordingly, I set out on the 15th of December for the Haimara-Cabura ; resting the first night at Caledonia, and the second at an Arawâk settlement in the Koraia, the scene of the Maquarri dance. The weather was tempestuous, the rainy

season having set in with violence, and we took this route to avoid the necessity of crossing the sea, as there is a passage called the Itabbo leading to the Manawarin through the forests, which is only navigable when the whole country is inundated. On the morning of the 18th we set out from the settlement in the Koraia, across the savannah, then covered with water. The reeds and grass appearing above the surface caused it to resemble at a little distance a pleasant lawn; while the islets and the main land were finely wooded, and an eta-tree here and there stood in solitary beauty in the midst of the savannah. A double rainbow appeared as we started, whose bright colours contrasted vividly with the dark clouds as it spanned our intended course. We proceeded through the Itabbo, meeting with much difficulty, owing to the fallen trees which obstructed the channel. I had formerly travelled that way with Mr. Smithett, but the impediments had much increased in number since that time.

We arrived at the settlement in Haimara-Cabura, and the intelligence soon spread through the neighbourhood. The Warau began to assemble. I was not sorry, for there were but two men at the place,—an old and a young one; the former very savage and crabbed in his manner. Endeavours to soothe him, by praising the beauty of a panther's skin, which he had made into a cap, and wore with the tail appending behind, were all in vain; he turned a deaf ear to everything spoken, whether pleasant or serious. The young fellow was also very annoying,



for he continued to dance the ungraceful, staggering dance of his nation at intervals during the whole day.

When their chief, named Damon, arrived, he told me that the old man was a great sorcerer, which explained his moroseness. When I began to instruct the people, he seemed much excited ; and when he saw them begin to arrange themselves for evening worship, probably thinking that the spirits who favoured the Christian religion were more powerful than his own familiars, he paid them the compliment of putting on a clean white shirt, and joining us.

The last party who came were heard about this time a long distance off, shouting with all their might. I met them as they landed from their canoes, and told them that we were about to speak to the great God, whom they must approach with silent reverence, or they would provoke his anger. This had the desired effect, and these poor ignorant beings behaved with great reverence during the singing and prayer. I afterwards addressed them in the broken English of which many of them know a little. The danger of man's present condition, and the love of God in sending his Son to die for our redemption, seemed to affect some of them much. They appeared exceedingly anxious to be taught. A reflection which it was impossible to avoid, was, "Is this then the time appointed by the Most High to commence the ingathering of the Waraus?" There was at least a good hope of it.

To relate every incident of this interesting visit



would be here impossible. When night came on, the people whose habitations were near departed; the others tied up their hammocks wherever they could find a place. There was much laughter over their fires, and more talking; but all agreed to follow me on my return to Caledonia, and to continue to attend there until a teacher could be placed among them. They fulfilled their promise, and on the Sabbath the place of worship was crowded with Indians,—Arawâks, Waraus, and Caribs. People from every neighbouring creek, some even from Moruca, came without having been invited. I was unwell, having been wet, more or less, the four previous days; yet I was enabled to perform the regular service, and to baptize four Arawâks from Wakapoa, who had been under instruction for a long time.

This sudden change in the disposition of the Waraus drew the attention of the Post-holder, Mr. W. C. McClintock, who had always used his influence in inducing the Indians to receive Christian instruction. They were now become too numerous to be accommodated at Caledonia, where the musquitoes were also painfully annoying, depriving them of sleep. The sea, which they had to cross, had sometimes swamped the Caribi canoes, which were very small, and only adapted for smooth water and the heads of the rivers. On these occasions both men and women jumped into the sea, and hung by the canoe with one hand till the water could be baled out. Notwithstanding, they complained that they

had sometimes lost their hammocks, and got their bread spoiled by the sea water. A new station thus became necessary. Mr. McClintock informed me of the existence of a fine hill, or elevated sand-reef, on the banks of the Moruca, near the mouth of Haimara-Cabura ; and he took advantage of the disposition of the Waraus to assemble a great number of them, who began to cut down the forest to form a Mission station among themselves.

While he was thus engaged, I went to Georgetown, and brought the matter before the Demerara and Essequibo branch of the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*. The application was immediately received, and a sum of money voted to commence with, but there was no Missionary whose services were available. When this was made apparent, and the question, " Whom shall we send ? " proposed by the Venerable Archdeacon Lugar, Mr. J. H. Nowers, who was present, rose up, and offered himself for the work, and was immediately appointed to the Mission.

On my return I found some hundreds of Indians assembled at the site of the proposed Mission station. They had already cleared a large tract of land under the superintendence of the Post-holder, who had erected a shed for his accommodation, over which the British colours were waving in the breeze. Our flag has been displayed amid many a scene of carnage and strife, and has floated over many scenes of peace and prosperity, but never has it been displayed in a more high and honourable cause. It seemed to represent the British Nation as fulfilling the great

purpose for which God has given so many millions of the heathen into her hand.

Some of the Waraus present had assembled from very remote quarters. They were headed by an old chief named Clementia, who drew them up in order, forming three sides of a square, to hear the decision of the *Society*. The old chief bore his silver headed staff in his hand, and had on a fashionable black coat, but was without shirt, trousers, or any other garment, except his Indian cloth. His people were even wilder and more grotesque than himself. The message with which I was charged, was explained to the Waraus by Stoll, Mr. McClintock's interpreter, and great was their joy to hear that a resident Missionary was about to be placed among them.

The work then proceeded with great rapidity. In every direction was heard the crash of falling trees, and the shouts of the Waraus. The posts and timber for the erection of the Chapel and Mission-house were soon cut, and a settler employed to erect the latter.

None of these Indians received wages. They provided their own cassava bread, and a few casks of salt-fish furnished them with rations. A puncheon of molasses was also sent for their use by P. Hughes, Esq. of Plantation Anna Regina.

How different were the prospects in March 1845, as it regarded the spread of the Gospel of Christ among these people, to those presented six months before! These events may seem strange to the reader, but they were equally surprising at the time

to those who witnessed them. To myself especially, who during many fruitless expeditions had seen so many proofs of their unwillingness, the present change seemed an evident mark of the finger of God. Nor was this feeling lessened at beholding the manner in which the altered disposition of the Waraus was met by the exertions of the Post-holder, the determination of the *Society*, and the appointment of a Missionary, between whom and myself there existed the bond of former friendship, and a recent family tie.

This was the second important Indian Mission undertaken by the *Society* in the course of nine months. - The former stations were flourishing, and a spirit of inquiry had gone forth among the people. Of the promising appearance of all the Indian Missions in the Colony, it was observed, that it might at that time have been said almost without a figure of speech :—

“ The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

## CHAPTER X.

### THE INDIAN MISSION AT WARAMURI.

Conversation with an old Warau—Erection of the Mission Buildings—Sickness of Missionaries—Extraordinary Imposture—Long Drought—Waramuri Mission nearly destroyed by Fire—Famine—Mortality by Dysentery—Progress of the Mission—Distant Indians desire a Teacher.

THE name of the hill which the Indians had so speedily cleared of the venerable forest that had covered it for ages, is Waramuri. This is the name of a species of black ant with which the spot abounded. It is about sixty miles (travelling by water) from the Upper Mission in Pomeroon.

About a month after the circumstances recorded in the last chapter, I found the clearing completed, and the frame of the Mission-house erected; all the people were gone, except the interpreter, and an old wild looking Warau, named John, and his family, who were awaiting the arrival of the new Missionary. As this was delayed for some days, a good opportunity was afforded of examining the situation.

A ridge of sand gradually ascends from the mouth of the Haimara-Cabura to a considerable height,



terminating abruptly in a conical hill, somewhat resembling in shape a tumulus, or ancient barrow. Three sides of this are precipitous, and the fourth is connected with the sand-reef. The cone is composed of sand mingled with a dark loose mould, containing an abundance of small shells, resembling those of periwinkles, marked with alternate stripes of white and black. These were so abundant in some places that the mould when taken up in a shovel appeared full of them. Between this hill and the Moruca there is a swamp, about a quarter of a mile in width. Both the swamp and the high land were then completely covered with prostrate trees of considerable size. From the top of the hill we could look down upon the forest, and trace the course of the Moruca and two tributary streams by the trees on their banks, which are higher than those in the other parts of the forest.

Being desirous of knowing what the Waraus thought of the sand and shells on which we stood, I inquired of the old man through the interpreter. He at once said, that when the world was made that ridge was the *sea-coast*. A conversation then arose respecting the creation of mankind. The old man said that three different races were made by God,—white, red, and black; that He intended the white men to follow their civilized habits, the red men to live as the Indians were then doing, and that the black people were formed only to serve the white. (Too many of the latter colour seem to have agreed in doctrine with the old Warau.) On assuring him



that the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ was intended for all men, he dissented, observing that it was doubtless good for *white* men, as they professed it, but *not* for the *red* men, or they would have followed it from the beginning.

It soon appeared that his principal objection to the Gospel arose from the fact that he had two wives, and had already discovered that Christian converts would only be allowed to keep one. He spoke with great animation on this point. "I really cannot put away my young wife," said he ; "and as for the old one, I certainly will not dismiss her ; for she grew up with me, and is the mother of most of my children." When told that God had appointed but one wife for each man, he seemed to think it very hard. On being asked why a man should have two wives, and a woman not be allowed two husbands, he directly said that his tribe did not consider either practice to be bad ; and that he knew a Warau woman who had *three*. Our further conversation I cannot repeat. It proved the utter grossness of their minds, and showed that my brother would have no easy task in endeavouring to remove by Gospel light the thick darkness which had covered the people.

When Mr. Nowers arrived, his exertions were so well seconded by the Indians, that the erection of the buildings advanced rapidly. They were built of rough timber, and thatched with trooly leaves. As the Moruca and its tributary streams are destitute of this tree, every leaf had to be fetched from the

Pomeroon in their small canoes, each trip occupying at least three days. The labour thus bestowed was only remunerated by a small allowance of salt-fish and molasses. As no sailing-vessel can enter the Moruca, the boards for the buildings were fetched by the Indians in the same manner from its mouth, a few at a time. The Waraus and Manawarin Caribs did most of this laborious work ; the Arawâks in the vicinity of the Mission thatched the sides and roofs of the buildings, and the carpenter's work was performed by settlers from the Pomeroon. The sum granted by the Demerara and Essequibo District Society was about 170*l.* sterling, and the labour of the Indians would have cost at least an equal sum had it been necessary to pay them.

As soon as the house was habitable, Mr. Nowers brought his family to the Mission. An accident happened while they were passing up the Moruca, which might have been attended with fatal consequences. The mouth of this stream forms a rapid during the rainy season, from its extreme narrowness and the immense quantity of water which there finds its outlet. Wild mangroves overhang it, whose roots and branches, somewhat resembling those of the banian-tree in the East, descend into the water. While the crew of the large canoe which contained the family was striving to overcome the opposing current, two Indian boys from Pomeroon Mission, who were in a small canoe loaded with plantains, got entangled among the mangroves ; their frail craft turned broadside to the current, and was driven





Waramuri Mission in 1846.

violently against a mass of spreading roots. One of them, an Arawâk, was completely hoisted out by a branch, and hung suspended, clinging to it for some little time; then, without losing his presence of mind, he swung himself several feet into the nearly-overturned canoe. It was a moment of great anxiety to us, as we were quite unable to approach them. But providentially the canoe was not swamped, though very small; the impeding roots and branches gave way, and they slipped through them, and shot down the stream with us to await the moment of high water. They were neither of them twelve years old, and though excellent swimmers, must have been carried under the roots of the trees and drowned had they fallen into the stream.

A little after dark we reached Waramuri, and as the sound of the paddles was heard by the people on the hill, a great number of lights were seen advancing to meet us; and on landing, the hearty greeting of about one hundred Caribi men and women was almost overwhelming. All were pressing to shake hands, and to carry some little article from the canoe to the house. It was a grateful spectacle, and very cheering to my friends.

When the Bishop visited this part of the country in August 1845, the Mission-house was completed, and the chapel was ready for Divine Service by the end of the year.

Sickness deprived both Pomeroon and Waramuri of the services of their respective Missionaries from August to November, 1845. I was first compelled



to leave my station by the effects of a severe fever, and Mr. Nowers had a very serious illness while visiting Georgetown for the purpose of being ordained, his wife being dangerously ill at the same time.

About this time a remarkable imposture was practised upon the Indians in that part of Guiana. A person pretending to be the Lord, went into the far interior with some deluded followers, and established himself in the upper part of the Cuyuni, a large tributary of the Essequibo. From this distant spot, which is near the Orinoco, he sent emissaries into the neighbourhood of all the missions, calling on the Indians to quit their homes and provision-grounds, and go to him. They were told that they should possess lands which would yield a large crop of cassava from a single stick, and various other absurdities, very alluring to the indolent Indian. These tales, joined to threats of horrible destruction which should come upon all who refused to go, had their influence upon the minds of many, and lured them away.

This movement commenced with the Wacawoios near the Essequibo, who had been observed to be providing themselves with fire-arms for some time before they set out. They were anxious to get the Caribs to join them, and hundreds of Indians of different tribes went from all parts of the country to "see God," as they termed it, some of whom perished by sickness on the way, and others found themselves in a state of destitution on arriving at the spot.



Intelligence of this singular movement was conveyed to the Bishop, whose invalid guest I was at that time. Having learned the particulars, I hastened to the Mission, though still very weak ; and Mr. Nowers followed with his family as soon as he was able to travel. We found that not one baptized person, and only one catechumen, had been enticed away ; but those who had kept aloof from sound instruction had fallen readily into the deceitful snare.

In the more remote districts some settlements were completely deserted. The inhabitants of others had been part of the way, and then returned, famished and ashamed. In the upper part of the Pomeroon I found that the course of the river was obstructed by two trees of great height, which had been cut from the banks to afford their families the means of crossing in their hasty march. Still the number of Caribs who went was but small compared with that of the Wacawoios, and the Waika branch of that tribe deserted their settlements on the Barima and Barama for a long time.

Kobise, the Caribi catechumen, who had been deluded away, soon returned to Waramuri, and thus detailed the particulars of his journey :—“ We travelled as fast as we could for thirteen days, and at length arrived at a savannah where some hundreds of Wacawoios and others were assembled. They had as yet scarcely any field provisions, and game was scarce from the multitude of hunters. I was led to a little enclosed hut, from which I heard

a voice commanding me to return, and fetch my friends and neighbours, as a great fire and water would come upon the whole world except that spot." He said also that the impostor did not make himself visible, but remained concealed from all, as far as he could learn, delivering his predictions by night; and that his voice sounded like that of a white person. He also added, that on looking around him he could see nothing but drinking and dancing, a portion of the little cassava bread which they could obtain being made into *paiwari*; and from this he became apprehensive that it was a delusion of the *Yourika*, or evil spirit, and made his escape from them the same night, and returned. The *Wacawoios* told him that if the Post-holder, or any other white person, chose to come to them to examine and interfere, he might do so, but should never return.<sup>1</sup>

This strange story, the leading facts of which have been well authenticated by other evidence, is a remarkable illustration of Matt. xxiv. 26, (a text which struck the Indians with astonishment when it was explained to them on this occasion,) inasmuch as the impostor was both in a secret chamber and in the desert. It also shows how necessary it is that every effort should be used to spread among these simple people the knowledge of that Gospel which alone can make them truly wise. At the same time, it

<sup>1</sup> On my asking the son of the chief of the Pomeroon Caribs whether he thought the *Wacawoios* would use foul play, he gave a contemptuous smile, and said, "A bad nation, the *Wacawoios*; they will never fight by day, but only in the night." The Caribs look upon them with some contempt, but dread their treachery.

proves that the knowledge of the existence of a Saviour from destruction had even then spread very widely, although to many it was but as a glimmering light, not sufficient to keep them from going into error.

No satisfactory account of this impostor has ever reached me, and I cannot commit to paper the conjectures and reports which I have heard respecting him. The delusion lasted for a long time, nor do I know whether it has yet ended, or the impostor met his fate, which, as he is said to be fond of *paiwari*, may be as fearful and violent as that of the pretended prophet of the Mormons, unless averted by deep repentance.

A long period of drought ensued. The rainy season, which is expected to commence in November, was confined to a few partial showers; and the earth was parched, and vegetation dried up by the long period of heat, which lasted from August 1845, until the following May.

During the height of this drought, Waramuri Mission was in danger of being destroyed by fire. The swamp in front of it has been already described. It was then covered with dry vegetation, and the trees which had been cut down a year before. A Caribi Indian, named Plata, incautiously set fire to this, and the flames soon began to rise, and spread with rapidity, covering a space a quarter of a mile in extent, and advancing towards the Mission. As soon as the alarm was given, Mr. Nowers and the Indians present ran to clear away the dried grass and brush-

wood which covered the slope, that the fire might have nothing to feed upon. It reached the foot of the hill, and as it began to climb in any place, it was beaten down with long poles. The heat was suffocating, and both the Missionary and Indians were blackened by the smoke; but after a severe struggle with the devouring element, by God's blessing on their exertions, the buildings were saved. At four, P. M., the fire rushed over the hill about thirty feet from the chapel, and passed on in a broad sheet of flame, devouring every thing in its progress.

Mr. Nowers requiring medical assistance for his family, I took charge of Waramuri for six weeks after this. The broad track of the conflagration was perfectly black. The fire continued burning in many places for weeks, feeding upon the peat, of which the soil is partly composed, and upon the enormous trunks of trees which lay in every direction. Some of these burning masses looked perfectly white during the glare of the sun by day, and glowed with intense brightness as night came on. The swamps were on fire in various directions. One evening six conflagrations were visible in different parts of the horizon. The nearest of these communicated with a portion of the forest, the flames catching the dry leaves, and mounting the trees in succession until their further progress was stopped by the river.

While proceeding one day up the river, a crackling noise was heard at a distance, accompanied by a dense smoke. The Indians said that a savannah

which we were approaching was on fire, and immediately rested on their paddles. We soon saw the flames driving before the wind, and devouring the reeds and grass, while our further progress was prevented by the burning flakes and smoke, until the fire had burnt down to the edge of the water.

The drought was severely felt in the cultivated part of the country, the navigable trenches of the sugar estates being nearly dry. The rivers, from the want of rain, had become salt and brackish to a great distance from their mouths. The heads of the little streamlets were sought for fresh water, and some of these became dry. The cassava which had been planted by the Indians in October, not having the expected rain to nourish it, did not grow. Hence food became scarce, and many expedients were resorted to, to supply the deficiency. The Waraus betook themselves to their favourite resource, the Eta swamps; and subsisted there as well as they could. When the famine was at its height, the fruit of the wild cashew became ripe, and afterwards that of the simiri, or locust-tree. From these and others the Indians managed to procure a scanty subsistence, and might be seen emerging from the forest with their quakes, or baskets, full of them. Unwholesome food! for using which they afterwards suffered greatly.

The rain fell at length in torrents, and vegetation revived and flourished. But dysentery began to carry off many of the Waraus and others, who had been subsisting for months on the natural productions



of the swamps and forests. There came from the Eta swamps to Waramuri, canoes full of attenuated beings, who applied to the Missionary for medicine and food. A great number of them died before they made this application. It was painful to visit their settlements, and hear the repeated exclamation, "Wabaiya, wabaiya!" (*Sick, sick!*) On visiting the settlement where they had formerly been so uncivil to me, Mr. Nowers discovered that eight had already died out of twenty-three, and others would probably have perished, but for God's blessing on the remedies supplied. As many as 300 doses of medicine were administered in one month, and with great apparent benefit, the reluctance of the Indians to use it being overcome by the urgent danger. It was a period of much distress and misery, and were there no other result than the temporal benefit that then flowed from the Mission at Waramuri, all the exertion and expense of its establishment would still have been amply rewarded.

When the sickness abated, the Mission began to assume a most flourishing appearance. Three hundred Indians attended instruction, and there were sixty-five children at school.

As the benefits, both spiritual and temporal, of missions became apparent to the people, so the desire of similar establishments began to spread. Intelligence was brought to us that the Waraus in the Aruka were desirous of having an English missionary placed among them, and that their chief had even caused them to erect a large building to serve as a



place of worship. We were preparing to visit that part of the country, though the distance is so great that the voyage would occupy about three weeks in going and returning. It is situated in the midst of the tract which lies between our territory and the Orinoco, and through which flow several large streams, one of the principal being the Waini, or Guainia, from which the name of the whole country is supposed to have been derived. Our visit was unavoidably prevented, and nothing was done. Still the desire of these benighted people to be instructed in the religion of Christ seems worthy of commemoration, as no missionary had been to visit them, and the reports conveyed by their own countrymen were all they had to found their desires upon. It seemed like the fulfilment of the words of prophecy :—

“As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### TRIALS.

Sickness and death in the Mission family—Temporary abandonment of Waramuri—Dangerous passage across the sea—The Pomeroon Mission—Extraordinary circumstance—Panic among the Caribs—Flourishing state of the Mission—Abandoned for a time—Ill health—Faithfulness of the Arawaks—The Bishop's visit—Waramuri and Pomeroon again supplied with teachers.

A PERIOD of prosperity seldom endures long ; and missions, as well as individuals, experience the truth of the words of their Lord, "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

Some of the facts recorded in our last chapter are of a mournful character, though mixed with much that is pleasing. The Mission at Waramuri had been threatened with destruction by fire, and the Indians who attended it had been scattered by famine, and had their numbers thinned by dysentery. Still, notwithstanding these things, the number of attendants increased, and the mutual attachment between the Missionary and his flock grew stronger daily. One Sabbath thirty-three canoes full of people came, besides those who travelled over land. Peter, the chief of the Caribs, with his wife America and his family, were baptized about this time, as the first-

fruits of the Gospel in that quarter, after having been under instruction nearly three years.

But a dark cloud was soon to pass over this promising Mission, and a famine, "not of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." Sickness had for some time prevailed in the family of the Missionary, and soon increased so as to disable him from duty altogether.

The object of our missionary records is not to excite sympathy on behalf of missionaries, but to give a true account of the progress of the Gospel among the heathen. Yet this and subsequent events must be briefly recorded, as they had an important influence, causing the temporary abandonment of Waramuri, and soon after of the Mission in the Pomeroon also.

In August, 1846, Mr. Nowers's youngest child died, after a lingering illness of some months. The father, having no materials of which to construct a coffin, was obliged to take the foot-boards of the Mission bateau.<sup>1</sup> While burying this child, the life of his second son was despaired of. This was followed by a violent illness which attacked both parents, and compelled their removal to the Mission in Pomeroon, where the family remained in a languishing state till the end of the year. Mr. Nowers partially recovered; but his complaint rendered him unable to bear the climate, and as the health of his

<sup>1</sup> The bateau is shaped somewhat like an Indian canoe, but built, instead of being hollowed from a single tree. Like the canoe, it has no keel.

family did not improve, he was compelled to resign his mission. After erecting a wooden slab bearing a simple inscription at the head of the grave of the departed infant, and surrounding it with a rail, an affectionate leave was taken of the people, and the Mission quitted on the 21st of December, to the great grief of all. When we were leaving, a young Carib presented himself with his paddle in his hand, and his hammock over his shoulder, and offered his services as a paddler. On being told that our crew was complete, he still persisted in requesting a passage, which was complied with.

The weather was unsettled and stormy at that season. In passing over the sea, we encountered three furious squalls, which continued for an hour and a half. We were unable to bring the boat round, as she would have instantly filled if exposed broadside to the waves, which broke over her bows in rapid succession. Our tent was cut away, and Mr. Nowers and an Indian engaged during the whole time in baling out the water with a bucket and a large calabash. The shore was near, but unsafe; and we were unable to see it from the rain and spray of the sea. While the steersman was striving to keep her head to the wind, his paddle broke short; but we fortunately had a spare one on board, which was immediately handed to him.

When the weather cleared, we found that, notwithstanding our crew had strained every nerve, we were still in the same spot in which the first squall had met us. We were now thankful to God for our

additional hand, and it was also a matter of satisfaction to us during the period of danger that several of our Arawâk crew were men of prayer, whose devotions we had overheard in secret the night before. When the squall was most severe, one of them said, "w'aforrawa," (*we are killed*,) but the others all laboured in silence.

On reaching the mouth of the Pomeroon, we found that a schooner had been caught by the same storm, and driven across the mud flat, nearly into the forest, notwithstanding she had dropped her anchor. The master said he hoped to get off next tide, which happened accordingly. Another schooner, belonging to the same person, was lost in her next voyage, all on board being drowned except two persons. In this vessel were lost most of Mr. Nowers's goods, which had been removed from Waramuri. He was soon after compelled to depart for England. The Indians of both Missions, by whom he was exceedingly beloved, inquired for a long time whether "Noa" would not soon come again. Waramuri Mission remained vacant for a long time after his departure.

We must now relate the course of events at the Mission in Pomeroon. As both the tribes there had a better stock of provisions, they had suffered less during the famine than the Waraus, and took the precaution of replanting their fields as soon as they saw "the sun kill" the first crop. But depredations were frequently committed by parties who, having been dupes of the Cuyuni imposture, had neglected

their own fields, and were now destitute of provisions on their return. A report reached us that two Wacawoios had been killed by Caribs, who had detected them in the act of robbing their fields, in a distant part of the country. This and other circumstances, whether true or not, seemed to threaten a feud. The dysentery had also visited the Indians in Pomeroron, but was chiefly fatal when it attacked children, many of whom died, but few adults.

In March 1847, an occurrence took place which it has been thought proper to introduce, as it exhibits a new feature in Indian life. The Mission was, as usual, in a state of the greatest tranquillity, when Commodore, the Caribi chief, came thither to reside, with his son and family, for protection. He had built a long house in front of our Caribi village for the accommodation of himself and family on the Sabbath, and planted a tall flag-staff before it as a symbol of his rank ; but during the week he usually lived at his settlement in the forest. This latter he now quitted, as he said, in consequence of having discovered that a strong party of Wacawoios, painted and equipped for war, were lurking near it. I thought but little of the circumstance, as the Indians generally had been in a very unsettled state ever since the unhappy migration to Cuyuni. The family had with them a young man, who had taken to wife a heathen daughter of the old chief. He was a stranger from a distant part, and was noted for never moving from the house without a short-barrelled gun in his hand.



After the services of the following Sabbath were concluded, we were disturbed about nine in the evening by a loud outcry proceeding from the Caribi portion of the village. While we were doubting as to the cause, Commodore's son and another young man came in a hurried manner to summon me, bearing torches and cutlasses in their hands. They declared that the Wacawoios were upon them, and had struck down the young stranger. Proceeding to the spot, I found the young man writhing in his hammock, apparently in great pain from a blow on his thigh. The women were crying around him in a frantic manner, and the whole village was in an uproar, every man getting his weapons to defend himself and family. With great difficulty I learned that the young man, who had gone some little distance from the houses, had seen a Wacawoio approaching behind him from the forest, and had suddenly turned and sprung upon him, throwing his arms around him, but had been hurled to the ground by the superior strength of his enemy, and received a random blow as he fell, the Wacawoio escaping into the forest, as the cry for assistance was raised and answered.

Nothing could exceed the panic of the women and children, and the men were all asking what they should do. It seemed best to tell them to assemble outside the chief's long house, while the women and children should keep inside. This they did, but the confusion was great, the house being quite full, and some of the females crying, others laughing,

and many talking with great vehemence at the same time.

At this moment, the wife of the young man ran into the midst of us, crying out that a man was concealed behind a bush near the house. Immediately every gun was pointed in that direction, and some of the Caribs began to spread themselves around, gliding close to the ground, with their pieces cocked and advanced, ready to be discharged at the slightest motion. The night was very dark, but many torches were blazing around, and the young woman before mentioned rushed wildly forward with the men, whirling a blazing firebrand to give them additional light.

A low cry was now heard close at hand, which appeared to be answered from a distance. The Caribs exclaimed, "Wacawoio," and became exasperated. I now expected that something serious would occur, and desired young Commodore to tell them all to stop and listen. This arrested them, each man remaining motionless, and he then interpreted to them, that "even if they should kill a Wacawoio, they would make bad worse, and the blood feud would never end. If enemies were there at all, they were probably few, and unprovided with fire-arms, and the Post-holder should be instantly sent for, who when he came would settle the matter in a peaceable and Christian manner."

The messengers were accordingly sent, and the Caribs satisfied themselves with posting guards outside the house till morning.

I then went to see the state of the Arawâks, one of the Caribs running after me with a torch, (which I had forgotten,) lest I should have been shot by mistake in the dark. Each Arawâk had his gun prepared, having heard the sound in the forest, which they said was the voice of men. No woman went to the water that night unless attended by her husband, who carried his cutlass and a blazing fire-brand. Many tales were afloat to account for an attack of the Wacawoios, which seemed to have been expected for some time before. Most of our people thought that they were a party from Cuyuni.

The next morning young Commodore with a party of his men scoured the forest in hopes of discovering the Wacawoios, and entering into a parley. They returned without success, having only found a small basket, which they said was of Wacawoio manufacture.

On the second morning the Post-holder arrived from his house at the mouth of the Pomeroon, having travelled all night. We went together towards the head of the river. As we were proceeding on the following morning up the beautiful windings of the stream, we heard a low whoop from the high bank above us. This proceeded from France, Commodore's brother, who had quitted his settlement, and with his two wives and children was going to seek shelter among his heathen relatives. He said that a woman had seen two Wacawoios in a field not far distant, and had been pursued by them towards

her house. All the people in that part were in a great panic, and though much allowance was to be made for excitement and exaggeration, it seemed certain that there was a strong party lurking in the forests with no good intentions.

Mr. Mc Clintock knowing an old Carib, named Parfrete, who was in close alliance with the Wacawoios, employed him to find out the truth, and negotiate with them. Parfrete had with him a man of that tribe, who was nearly blind from severe ophthalmia. He seemed to know something of the intentions of his countrymen, but was unwilling to divulge them.

It afterwards appeared, that the father of the young Carib who had been assaulted, had two years before been assassinated before his eyes, and that he, having discharged an arrow at the men who killed him, had been marked out to be put to death. Whether he considered himself as bound by their fearful custom to be the avenger of blood, we know not, but it seemed evident from his wild manner, that his mind was affected by the circumstances in which he was placed. His life having been attempted in the Essequibo, where he resided, he fled to Pomeroon, and this led to the events here related. I did not consider his presence desirable at the Mission, and recommended him to seek employment at the coast on one of the sugar estates, whither his enemies would not be able to follow him with any prospect of success in their murderous design.

The Mission again became quiet as before. Never

had its buildings appeared so neat ; and all the paths which led to the different parts of the village were kept in order, and bordered with lilies, whose large red flowers contrasted beautifully with their dark green leaves.

Many Arawâks were about this time drawn from the recesses of the Akawini. They had been careless until about this period, when they were persuaded to join us by some Christians of their own tribe. From their little intercourse with civilized persons, some of them were totally unacquainted with English ; and for their use and that of others of their tribe in a similar condition, I translated, and caused to be printed, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments. These proved very useful. The number of catechumens among the Caribs also increased, so that it became necessary to instruct the tribes separately on alternate evenings throughout the week.

At this time the sad news of the famine in Ireland, and in the Highlands of Scotland, reached us. Collections were made all over the colony for the relief of the sufferers. The subject was laid before the Indians at the Mission, and they at once offered to contribute cassava and other provisions, for the relief of the hungry people. When told that they would spoil in their passage over the wide sea, they said that they had little money, as the drought of the preceding year had reduced them to penury, and their clothes were nearly worn out, their young men being at that time absent working for money to buy more. This was the truth, as I knew.



Cornelius was present, and seeing how matters stood, he went quietly away. He had just returned from the sugar estates, bringing with him about ten dollars, the produce of his industry, with which he was about to proceed to Georgetown to purchase clothes for his family. This sum he brought, and laid before me. Then taking one dollar, he said, "I give this for myself, and this," said he, adding another, "for my wife and eldest daughter." Then turning to his countrymen, he continued, "Friends, you have little money, I will lend you from this till it is gone, and repay me when you are able." One after another availed themselves of the offer ; others rummaged up a little more ; some poor old widows brought their "half-bits," (two-pence) and fifty-two dollars were sent that week from Pomeroon. Half of that sum was collected among the negroes and other inhabitants of the lower district of the river. I may add here, that though these Indians were very poor indeed, with respect to money, yet they regularly contributed to the monthly offertory, and did all they could to keep the Mission buildings in repair.

The Mission at Waramuri was still lying desolate, and that of the Pomeroon was soon to share its fate. I became at this period so weak as to be unable to continue my duties. A temporary change of air produced some benefit, but a relapse ensued immediately on my return, and I was compelled to quit the river as a residence. The scene that ensued on parting with the people will never be



forgotten by us, but being in a great measure of a personal nature, it need not be described.

Several months elapsed ere I could regain strength sufficient to visit the Mission. During this period many of the people came weekly to spend the Sabbath with me on the coast. On these occasions they would lament the cessation of religious services in their own little chapel, and say in their peculiar idiom, "Strength is now wanting to our prayers." At length I was enabled to pay a monthly visit of several days, to inspect the school, instruct the catechumens, and perform Divine Service.

While left to themselves during this trying period, many of our converts were ready to do all they could. Cornelius was always willing to visit the Indians of his tribe in more distant parts, and actually brought several persons to the Mission. Thomas, in the meantime, kept the school together, instructing the children as well as he was able. Others exerted themselves in various ways, but some fell into sin.

In October 1848, the Bishop again visited the Mission, for the third time. The following is an extract from the account of this visit :—

"On the morning of the 2d November, the Bishop inspected the Indian school. The English Testament class, numbering forty of both sexes, gratified his lordship by an improvement in their reading since his last visit, notwithstanding the length of time during which the sickness and absence of the Missionary had thrown them on their own resources.

Divine service was next performed in the chapel, at the junction of the rivers Pomeroon and Arapiaco, and attended by about 180. Many more would have been present, had it not been necessary to go by water. The Holy Communion was administered to forty recipients. In his address to the people, the Bishop expressed his heartfelt satisfaction at seeing them so numerous, notwithstanding their disadvantages, and evidencing a disposition of such steady regard to the Gospel which they had received.

“While regretting the absence of the Caribs on this occasion, it was still a matter of rejoicing that the number of the Arawâks alone about equalled that of the two tribes formerly assembled together.

“Returning to the Hill, the Bishop, after inspecting the habitations of the people, attended evening school, in which the primary truths of Christianity are taught in their own tongue. Eighty-five read their little Indian books, and joined with much apparent devotion in the singing and prayers. There was also present a head-man with six of his people, from Waramuri, to whom the Bishop signified his hope of being able to supply that vacant Mission with a teacher in the beginning of 1849. This gave much satisfaction.”

This hope was fulfilled soon after by the appointment of Mr. Currie to Waramuri. That Mission had acquired a bad character for unhealthiness, and the Bishop had been previously unable to provide a duly qualified teacher.

In visiting Waramuri, to take the bateau, and

make arrangements for Mr. Currie's reception, I found that the forest had already grown up again, so that only the tops of the buildings were visible from the river, above the young trees. Some of the boards of the flooring of the verandah of the house had been stolen by Venezuelan traders, and the wood-ants had commenced operations in the chapel, but the damage could be easily repaired.

One circumstance deserves notice. The Indians in this part, though so long deserted, as they must have thought, had given proof of undiminished love for their Mission, by cutting a pathway through the young trees from the landing-place to the Mission house and Chapel, as wide as a carriage-road, having heard that a teacher was coming to them. It was cheering to see, amid so many disheartening circumstances, that the sickness of the Missionaries alone had kept back the Missions.

After this visit I found it necessary to return to England. Since then, we have received very satisfactory accounts from Mr. Currie, who laboured successfully there.

Mr. Landroy was sent to take charge of the Pomer-oon Mission, but was prevented from going thither for nearly ten months. His reports have since been very encouraging.

In the Lower District of the Pomeroon, a chapel has been erected on the small estate called Hackney, but want of funds and general depression prevented its being finished off so neatly as we could wish.

Divine Service has, however, been performed there for two years past.

The foregoing is a brief account of a few of the leading incidents of the Missionary labour of different individuals, in one of the wildest parts of Guiana : among people of various languages, who are not devoid of interest, though thinly scattered amidst dense forests and almost inaccessible swamps. May the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, thus planted, be watered from on high, and bear fruit among them, even to the end !

“ Return, we beseech thee : O God of Hosts, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this Vine ! ”

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE ARUABISI COAST.

Situation of the Ituribisi—Its Inhabitants—Efforts of the Rector of St. John's for their conversion—Success—Account of the Mission at his residence—The Capoue, Quacabuca, and Tapacuma lakes—Account of the Indians residing in that neighbourhood.

THE broad estuary forming the mouth of the River Essequibo contains many islands, which divide it into various channels, some of which are wide, but difficult to navigate, on account of the shoals of mud and sand. These numerous islands, though low, have a picturesque appearance, being covered with trees. Some of them are several miles in length, and those nearest the sea have been highly cultivated, especially Leguan and Wakenaam.

To the westward of these last is Tiger Island, so called from the ancient name Aruabisi, by which that part of the coast was known. The Arawâks so named it from their word "Arua," or *the jaguar*, as great numbers of those animals infested that part of the country.

A small stream, on the main land, enters the channel which divides it from Tiger Island. This stream flows from a beautiful lake or savannah, called Ituribisi, from the Arawâk word "Ituri," which is the

name of the *red howling-monkey*, or *baboon*, as it is erroneously called.

The shores of the lake are inhabited by Arawâk Indians, who are intimately connected with those of the Pomeroon by friendship and matrimonial alliances. There are paths leading from their various settlements to the Tapacuma and Arapiaco.

Many of the Indians inhabiting the Ituribisi have been from time to time brought over from heathenism to Christianity by the labours of the Rev. W. Austin, Rector of St. John's, and Rural Dean of Essequibo. He commenced the work of instructing them about the time of the establishment of the Mission in Pomeroon in 1840.

Their nearest settlements are within a few hours' walk of the rectory, and those Indians who were anxious to be taught soon became frequent and welcome visitors there, and attendants at the parish church. After a time they were induced to put up small cottages for their own accommodation on the Sabbath. These were built on the sand-reef close to the dwelling of their minister, some of them being very neatly constructed of boards, with doors and window shutters, the roof alone thatched. The situation is pleasant, being between the public road and the shore, with a small island of recent formation lying directly in front. At this place they have attended as regularly as their brethren at the missions in the interior ; being thus under the supervision of their pastor, and benefited by his instructions and protection, of which last the Indians stand in need



among the black and coloured population, with the Hindoos and Portuguese, who inhabit the coast.

The care of an extensive parish, many miles in length, with five or six places of worship, and containing a population of more than 5,000 souls, could leave but little time for missionary labour. Yet the work went steadily on, and the number of Indian converts gradually increased. Among the people of Ituribisi, during the first eight years there were 126 baptized, of whom thirty couples were also married.

The two daughters of Mr. Austin attended to the instruction of the Indian children, and the zeal and perseverance of these young ladies in the daily task of teaching the Arawâk girls deserve great commendation. They also acquired a considerable knowledge of the Indian language, which is almost indispensable to the production of real and lasting good among them.

A promising field of labour has thus been opened. The Indians in the Ituribisi and its neighbourhood are all of one tribe; their number in 1844 was 139; in 1848 there were 218, being an increase of 79; and they were yearly becoming more numerous. This consideration renders the station an important one. It has not been on the same footing as the other Missions, not being supported by any society, but continued by the unassisted exertions of its founder and his family. The good which has been done there is not small, and should any unforeseen circumstance compel the abandonment of the mission field in Pomeroon, many of our converts might be

brought from thence to that spot, which would thus become the most important Arawâk Mission in Guiana.

The work of conversion of the Indians has also been begun in other parts of the coast of Essequibo, especially at Capoue and in the adjacent district.

The Capoue is a small lake, about ten miles from the Ituribisi, and three or four miles from the sea, into which it discharges its superabundant waters by a small stream. Its banks are inhabited by about sixty-five Arawâks, who, living so close to the plantations, are, generally speaking, of very immoral habits. A few also live at the Quacabuca, a little lake in its neighbourhood. From these lakes there is an Indian path leading to a tributary of the Pomeroon.

Another lake, several miles in circumference, and of great beauty, lies to the westward of these, and completes the chain. It is called the Tapacuma. A small river of the same name flows from it in an inland direction till it meets the Pomeroon. In the surrounding forests the Indians are numerous.

In the early state of the Pomeroon Mission, its greatest opponents were found among the people in this quarter. Some of their sorcerers distinguished themselves by the vehemence of their denunciations, and though their party grew weak, the infatuation of some of their votaries was undiminished, as many ridiculous circumstances proved. One of them meeting a friend on the river, and being asked if he had not been very ill lately, replied, " Yes, my

friend, I went past the chapel one Sunday in the day time, while all the people were at their incantations inside ; some of them affected me, for soon afterwards I was attacked with dysentery. I shall in future pass it by night." Such were the absurdities which the sorcerers taught the people to believe, and so great the influence exercised by them.

They also encouraged drunken feasts in opposition to the sobriety inculcated by the religion of Jesus, and this was a stronghold to them. One of them being at a *paiwari* drinking, and waxing valiant as he became irrational, informed his adherents of his intention of throwing me into the river. When the effects of the liquor had worn off, however, he became rather ashamed of his public announcement, and carefully avoided a meeting.

As these people were doing much harm to the cause of Christ, I soon after visited the settlement of our chief opponent, hoping to bring him to a better mind. He was not to be found, however, but one of his sons received me kindly, and I hoped that good would result from the interview to himself and family.

From this settlement we proceeded over land towards the Capoue lake, along the path before mentioned. This led us from the dense forest across a tract of white sand, which is studded all over with clumps of trees, shorter and smaller than those of the Mora forest. This kind of bush is called "*muri*" by the Indians, and has a beautiful appearance, looking as if it had been laid out and

planted by the hand of man. Wild animals ran across the sand from one shelter to another, being disturbed at our approach. Every creature that passes leaves a track on the sand, and my guide pointed out the recent footprints of a tapir and its young one across our path. An attack of fever, brought on by the heat of the sun, the rays of which are powerfully reflected from the sand, compelled me to return to a settlement of friendly Indians without accomplishing our object. A second journey brought us to the lake, where the people were assembled, and entreated to attend the ministry of a clergyman at the negro districts on the coast in their neighbourhood.

After a considerable lapse of time, I was again enabled to visit the Capoue. On our way we met the son of the old sorcerer, before mentioned, who said that he had been attending Divine Service on the coast with his wife and children. This was good news. On arriving at the lake we found a sick man and his family, who told me that all the other people had gone to Church the day before.

In the evening, just before sunset, we saw them returning along the shores of the lake. On meeting and congratulating them on the happy change, they said that two of their number had been that morning baptized and married by the Rev. J. F. Bourne, who had visited them and induced them to attend his ministry.

On going to see the newly-married couple, I found that the bride was well known to me. They ex-

pressed themselves very becomingly, and seemed to have a due feeling of the solemn vows they had taken. When we were about to depart, the remnant of a wedding-cake was produced, (which had been made for them by some civilized friend,) and we were invited to partake of it. A wedding-cake in an Indian hut, and no drunken feast! the circumstance was most striking among the people at Capoue.

Mr. Bourne having induced some of these people to attend his ministry regularly, set apart a few seats in the chapel of St. Saviour for their accommodation, which they have since occupied. This arrangement was continued by the Rev. H. Hunter, who succeeded to the charge of the district, and it was most pleasing to see them take their places in front of the chancel, surrounded by a large congregation of black people.

About one half of the Arawâks of Capoue and its neighbourhood, in course of time, embraced the Gospel and were baptized; but the others remained obstinate in heathenism. The temptations to which all are exposed, are much greater on the coast than in the interior of the country, from the facility with which ardent spirits may be obtained, and the evil examples which abound among professing Christians.

It will be seen, that on the coast of Essequibo, the parochial clergy have ably cooperated with the Missions in the interior, and their labours have been blessed with fruit accordingly. They are, at present,



little able to extend their labours among the Aborigines, on account of the great number of Hindoo and other immigrants, which, as has been before observed, have been added to the former negro population, and who require far more attention than can be bestowed upon them.<sup>7</sup>

“ Who is sufficient for these things ? ”

<sup>1</sup> To complete the view of the Indian Missions in the colony of Essequibo, it is necessary to add here, that there are one or two small stations, supported by different denominations, on the western bank of the Essequibo, between Bartica and the Ituribisi, while the Romanists have had a Mission, supported by Government, in the Moruca, among the refugees from Venezuela, since the year 1837.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE MAHAICONI MISSION.

Situation of the Mahaiconi—The Bishop's visit to the Mahaica, and its result—Visit to the Mahaiconi—Indian Assembly, and Maquarri Dance—Establishment of the Mission—Its subsequent history.

THE former Missions of which an account has been given, are all situated near the western boundary, and in the colony of Essequibo. That which is the subject of the present chapter, lies to the eastward of the Demerara, between that river and the Berbice.

Between those large streams, three smaller ones enter the sea ; the Mahaica, the Mahaiconi, and the Abari. The upper parts of these are inhabited by Indians, chiefly of the Arawâk nation, with a few Waraus.

The establishment of Missions in other parts of the country had been attended with much difficulty, from the unwillingness of the people to listen to a religion which was new to them. In the present instance, however, the first step was taken by the Arawâk Indians ; who, having heard of the Missions established in other parts, became desirous of having a Christian teacher placed among themselves. This

was a great event, and one which marked strongly the change of feeling that was gradually taking place among their tribe.

The wishes of the Indians were made known through the Post-holder of that district, Mr. R. Hancock. The Bishop having been informed of the circumstance, immediately determined to visit them, that he might become better acquainted with their condition, confirm their desires, and select a situation for a Mission, if the establishment of one should seem desirable.

On Wednesday, the 17th of April, 1844, the Bishop left Georgetown. I had the happiness of accompanying him on this interesting occasion. We reached Mahaica on the following day, and were there met by Mr. Hancock, who had provided a bateau with six negro paddlers, in which we embarked. Proceeding up the Mahaica, the party slept that night at the mouth of a small stream, called the Lama, suspending their hammocks between the trees. This, in the present instance, was attended with little inconvenience, the night being serene and calm.

The next day we went many miles without meeting a single Indian. At length, a party of thirteen were found at a landing-place. They informed the Bishop, that no Indians had assembled to meet him, as had been anticipated. There were but forty-one residing on the Mahaica and its tributaries, most of whom inhabited the Laluni, which is connected with the Demerara by an Indian path of about three

hours' walk. A Mission on the Demerara would be sufficiently near them, and the others could easily travel overland to the Mahaiconi, one day's journey to the eastward. On this being proposed to them, they readily assented, and promised to meet the Bishop there on the following Tuesday.

The Mahaica being thus ineligible, the party lost no time in returning. The paddlers were rested for some hours at a landing-place on the banks of the stream. Here there were one or two small sheds, put up by the Indians for shelter when benighted in rainy weather. It being dark when we again started, the negroes who were with us set fire to the thatch, thus destroying the shelter of which they had partaken, that they might enjoy the spectacle of a few minutes' blaze. As this was an act of wanton mischief, they were severely and justly rebuked.

The Mahaica ferry was reached about five the following morning; the mosquitoes having attacked us in swarms the whole night.

Having attended Divine Service in the chapel of St. Albans, Berbice, on the Sabbath, we again embarked on Monday, proceeding up the Mahaiconi in a bateau with four negro rowers. We were accompanied by the Post-holder, as before, and by a Mr. De Ryck. A large canoe was in attendance, containing ten Arawâks, who had descended the river to accompany the Bishop. The weather was extremely fine, and the river scenery was rendered still more pleasant by the flocks of parrots and

macaws, which were seated on the branches of the trees on both sides of the stream.

The Mahaiconi is inhabited both by Waraus and Arawâks. Having rested for several hours in the afternoon, the party reached the first Warau settlement, called Mahoni, about half-past three on the following morning. Of that tribe about forty-five were residing in the neighbourhood, most of whom assembled at daybreak to learn the object of our visit. The children of the party were lively and interesting, but the adults appeared to be very dull and stupid, with the single exception of their chief, Simon. He, on the contrary, was very intelligent, and as he understood English, the Bishop addressed the people through him. He listened with attention, and promised to use his influence with them.

About nine in the morning we again set forward. After rowing some miles, the party landed and proceeded on foot through the forest, leaving the bateau in charge of the negro crew, the principal man of whom was named Bacchus.<sup>1</sup>

About noon we got clear of the forest, and entered on a large plain. At a distance appeared an Indian village, which was the principal settle-

<sup>1</sup> The names of the gods and goddesses, heroes and tyrants of classic antiquity, were given to the negroes in their days of heathenism and slavery, and are still retained. One of our paddlers on the Mahaica was named *Apollo*. I have been in a small canoe with *Jupiter* and *Vulcan*. The African names of Quashi, Quaco, Cudjo, Quasiba, Amba, Adjuba, and many others, are also retained; the whole being mingled with those of the great men of modern times. Negro names sometimes present strange combinations—*Adonis Bob*, *Cupido Toby*, and *Castlereagh Jack*, are specimens.







ment of the Arawâks. As we drew nearer, the singular and well-remembered shouts of the assembled Indians told that they were engaged in a grand Maquarri dance, similar to that which I had formerly witnessed in the Koraia, and of which a description has been given.

There were about 200 persons present. Most of the men were dancing, having their faces painted red in grotesque patterns, and their heads adorned, some with coronals of feathers, and others with the white down of birds. Their attire and ornaments were of the most showy and fantastic description. The females were quietly looking on, being seated on the ground under a large house, where was placed a canoe of paiwari.

There was a wild beauty in the whole scene, but nothing could have shown their ignorance of the doctrines of the Gospel more strongly, than their preparing for a drunken festival to honour the visit of a Christian Bishop. They were, as yet, quite sober; the entertainment having but just commenced. If they could have known sooner of the Bishop's intention to visit them, and thus have had longer time for preparation, two canoes of paiwari would have been provided instead of one.

Their chief Swey was sick, and confined to his hammock. While the Bishop went to see him, and inspect the village, I asked the dancers to desist, which they did immediately, and assembled in a large house, where the men seated themselves in rows all round, the women and children standing

behind them. Their whips, which partake of a sacred character in their ideas, were carefully laid in a heap on a board in the centre of the house, and they waited in silence the address of the Bishop.

It set before them their benighted condition, and the blessings of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. After the object of our visit had been stated and explained to them, they were kindly reminded of the evil consequences which sometimes followed their feasts, and of some instances of murder and suicide which had lately happened among them, the effects of intoxication. As the address of the Bishop was in English, few of them had more than a very general idea of its object ; but on its being repeated in their own tongue, they acknowledged its truth,—declared that they “knew nothing,” and asked with apparent eagerness when the promised teacher would be placed among them. An appropriate psalm having been sung, they all knelt with deep reverence, while the Bishop solemnly besought the blessing of the Great Head of the Church upon the work begun for the glory of his holy name.

After the conference had ended, an animated conversation followed among the Indians. I had brought with me an Indian youth from Pomeroon, and there was also a man present from Ituribisi. These persons were each surrounded by a circle of attentive listeners, to whom they gave an account of the respective Mission Stations to which they belonged.

Swey, the sick chief, was much affected when the

Bishop knelt at the side of his hammock, and prayed for his recovery. He said that he was "grieved at being sick," which would prevent his taking part in the work that was before them.

One object of the expedition having, by God's blessing, been thus far accomplished, the Bishop proceeded to select a site for a future rustic chapel, and residence for a teacher, and fixed upon a very pleasant spot on a large plain, near a small stream of excellent water.

As it was near night, and the forest path would be difficult and dangerous, the Bishop, myself, and three Indians embarked in a canoe, so small and crank that the whole party were obliged to sit on small pieces of wood laid in the bottom. In this manner we proceeded, groping our way, as it were, in the increasing darkness, for nearly two hours, when we reached a wider stream. The moonlight soon discovered to us the bateau, near which Bacchus had kindled a fire, and provided an evening meal, of which we were all in great need. At three the next morning the party left Mahoni, descended the river, and arrived the next evening at sunset at the Mahaiconi ferry.

Mr. Berry was soon after sent to commence the Mission. Divine Service was first performed on the 20th of August, 142 Indians being present, who behaved with great reverence and attention. On this occasion the old chief signified to the Postholder and his assembled people, that his infirmities made him desirous of resigning his authority to his

son, John Andrew, an intelligent and steady young man. This met the approval of all the Indians present, and the young man proceeded to Georgetown with the Post-holder, for the purpose of being confirmed in his office by the Governor.

In the course of the following year, the infant Mission was placed under the superintendence of the Rev. J. F. Bourne, who had been removed from the neighbourhood of Capoue, on the coast of Essequibo, to the charge of the Enmore chapel and district, a few miles to the westward of the Mahaica. He was enabled to visit the Mission at intervals of three or four months. These visits were valued by the Indians, who have been in consequence much attached to him.

Mr. Berry was succeeded in the office of Catechist by Mr. S. Manning, in June 1846. Mr. Manning was compelled to leave in the early part of 1848, by severe illness. The late Governor of the colony (the present Sir Henry Light,) having visited the Mission with a party of gentlemen, found him extremely ill with dysentery. The Governor, on his return, told the Bishop of his illness, who at once wrote to Mr. Bourne, to inform him of the circumstance. Mr. Bourne started the next morning for the Mahai-coni, and finding Mr. Manning somewhat better, brought him to his house at Enmore. It was not thought advisable for him to return to the Mission, which consequently lay vacant.

This was the period of trial to our Missions already alluded to. At the Quarterly meeting of

the District Society at Georgetown, in April, the Secretary had to report the melancholy fact, that all our stations were in a state of temporary abandonment, on account of the sickness of the Missionaries. There was not any person who could at that time have been sent to take charge of them. The natives of the country are best fitted in constitution to stand the climate, but there was no college nor training institution there to which we could look for men to supply the need that was then so severely felt.

The Indians at Mahaiconi, as well as at the other stations, regretted the want of a teacher. Some of them came soon after to Mr. Bourne, and said that they should like to have Mr. De Ryck stationed among them if the Bishop approved of him. Mr. Bourne having made suitable inquiries, recommended him, and he was appointed to the vacant Mission.

A few months after, the Bishop and Mr. Bourne visited the Mahaiconi, and were able to make the following report :—"Mr. De Ryck has made great improvements since he has been appointed as Catechist to the Mission. He has known many of the Indians from boyhood ; and has had constant intercourse with them. They seem to respect and obey him, and as he is attached to the locality, and not young, I hope he will feel an interest in gathering them round him, and improving them in every way. They have already built upwards of thirty houses on the school-house savannah. There are upwards of

200 Indians residing within sound of the carronade,<sup>1</sup> and more are constantly adding themselves to the number." Many of these Arawâks, and among them John Andrew, their chief, and Daniel the interpreter, had been baptized some time before, and on this occasion ten other adults were baptized, and two couples married. The Mission has since gone on steadily, and will, we trust, extend its beneficial influences far and wide, by the blessing of Him from whom alone can be expected a harvest of souls,—who can bless the humblest means, and without whom a Paul may plant, and an Apollos water, in vain.

“Not by Might, nor by Power ; but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

<sup>1</sup> The Indians are accustomed to be summoned by the discharge of a gun.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CHARACTER, HABITS, AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE INDIANS.

Their indolence and apathy—Acute observation—Habits, hospitality &c.—Drunkenness—Polygamy—Revenge—Superstitions—The Yauhahu or Demons—The system of Sorcery or Piai-ism—Anecdotes—The Orehu, her qualities—Indian Tradition.

THOUGH the work of conversion has been commenced, and some progress made, yet much more remains to be done among the Indians of British Guiana. The majority of the tribes will still follow the customs and superstitions of their heathen ancestors. A short account of these may be useful to any future Missionary, and interesting to the Christian public.

Very different opinions prevail, and are expressed, respecting the *character* of the Aborigines of Guiana. By some they are considered as being, in their natural condition, a *virtuous* and *strictly moral* race. Others may be met with, who call them *lazy*, *ungrateful*, and *worthless*; who give them credit for no good quality, and assert that they are incapable of elevation. In one point all seem to agree, that by contact

with civilization, without the healing power of Christianity, they become much worse than they were before in their naturally wild condition.

The Indian, in his natural state, is neither so good nor so bad as has been represented. Some idea may be formed from the history of our Missions, of the character and condition of the various tribes. The points wherein they differ have been briefly stated; but there are some things wherein they mostly agree, which seem to require further notice.

*Indolence* is one of these. The continuous exertion required from every one who has to get his living among us, is not necessary in their way of life. The civilized man is compelled to exert his body or tax his mind constantly, in order to keep pace with his fellows, and too often places his happiness in the acquisition of a large portion of this world's goods; but the Indian's aim is to get through life with as little trouble as possible. They are industrious only by fits and starts: and as the climate renders clothing unnecessary, they have little to provide for beyond their daily food, and spend hours in their hammocks, picking their teeth, examining their features in a piece of looking-glass, and meditating some new and striking way of daubing their faces with arnotto. At other times they may be seen eradicating the hairs from their beards and eye-brows,—in the room of which latter some tribes tattoo lines according to their own ideas of beauty. The corners of the mouth are likewise tattooed in various patterns.

Their *apathy* is also noted, though I think much

of it is assumed, and that their feelings are stronger than is generally supposed. They possess, however, great control over them, and seldom give vent to them in the presence of strangers, especially of the whites, for whom they entertain great reverence. Some of them are indeed so bashful that they will come behind a white person whom they wish to address, and seldom speak till necessity obliges them. This is often carried to a disagreeable and ridiculous extent, as in the following instance :—while passing up the river at midnight, on our return from a voyage of several days, as we drew near a small settlement on the bank, the Indian paddlers heard a jaguar<sup>1</sup> prowling round the house, the sides of which were open, the inhabitants asleep, and their fires so low as to be scarcely visible from the river. Instead

<sup>1</sup> These animals are so seldom seen by day, that in a series of monthly and sometimes weekly voyages and journeys, through different parts of the country, during a period of nine years, I have only had a full and perfect view of one of their species. Others, however, have seen them more frequently. A gentleman of my acquaintance was eating his breakfast one morning in the forest, when a Warau who was sitting opposite to him exclaimed “Tobi!” which is their word for jaguar. On looking round, my friend saw one of these animals standing on a tree behind him, and looking wistfully either at him or his breakfast. The alarm was given, and the jaguar pursued, but in vain. By night they are very daring. I have heard one dash through the water close to a house where people were waiting to shoot it. They will infest the estates night after night, and commit depredations among the live stock. On an urgent occasion, Mr. Nowers was descending the Mornca, with his family, about four in the morning, when a jaguar ran along the side of the narrow stream, for a long distance, growling and yelling in a very unpleasant manner. It was too dark to see him, but the splash of his foot-fall was distinctly heard within a few yards as the Indians rested on their paddles to listen.

of giving an immediate alarm, as they would have done if alone, they waited in silence till the low dismal yell attracted my attention, and they were desired to do so. They then paddled towards the house. Before we reached it, a bright flame showed that the sleepers had awakened, and were replenishing their fires ; a few cries in a low peculiar note were exchanged, and we passed on.

This silence of the Indian paddler forms a strong contrast to the songs of the negro boatmen. To cheer their labour, one of these will sing a sentence, often extempore, to which all the others reply by a loud chorus ; this is followed by another sentence, and the chorus again renewed, and so on, till they all become tired. This kind of singing is much practised by the negroes on the water, especially during the night in a clear moonshine ; it is peculiarly animating, and may be heard at a great distance. Unhappily, their songs are mostly of a very improper nature.

The *senses* of the Indian are very *acute* ; their sight, hearing, and sense of smell, naturally keen, being sharpened by necessity and continual exercise. They are peculiarly fitted for following game, or tracking an enemy through the forests and swamps. The turn of a leaf, or a broken twig, is examined with minute attention. They will tell how many men, women, and children have passed, where a stranger could only see confused marks on the path before him ; and from the appearance of the track, and state of the weather will tell, within a little, the

time that has elapsed since the foot-marks were made. Frequently, when on arriving at a settlement, I have been disappointed by the absence of the people, I have seen the Indians with me examine the ashes of the fires, the dust on the utensils that have been left, and the various paths leading from the place, from which they would tell when the people left the house, and in which direction they were gone. The keen eye of an Indian boy once (by Divine providence) saved me from the bite of a labaria. I was about to put my hand in a box of loose school-papers, when the Indian lad arrested it crying, "Snake!" I tried in vain to get a sight of the snake, but he still persisted in saying it was there, on which I overturned the box. The deadly reptile darted about, seeking a way of escape, but being in a school-room, was easily destroyed by the Indian boys with long sticks, though, as may be supposed, he cleared the apartment at first.

Notwithstanding the indolence with which the Indians are charged, and the apathy ascribed to them, they are *keen observers of natural objects*. Though utterly unacquainted with scientific rules, their knowledge of medicinal and poisonous plants shows that they must have studied the properties of the vegetable kingdom. They are also perfectly acquainted with the habits of the animals, birds, and insects, which inhabit their country; and will sometimes point out singular facts connected with them. An Indian girl, lately in our service, called the attention of her mistress to a white scorpion, sur-



rounded by bands of the warrior or hunting ants, which had taken possession of the house, and were destroying the vermin. The scorpion seemed to have loose scales on her back, which the Indian girl said were her young ones. It was so, and the parent was brandishing her venomous tail, as she hurried on, in the vain hope of preserving their lives as well as her own, from the attack of the surrounding ants.<sup>1</sup>

An accurate knowledge of the nature and habits of wild animals is indispensable to men whose subsistence is in a great measure derived from the chase. The Indian hunter possesses it in perfection. He will exactly imitate the cry of various birds and animals, and shoot them when he has thus brought them within reach of his gun, arrow, or blow-pipe. He then hastens home, casts the game before his wife, and reposes in his hammock till she has cooked it.

They are not very nice about the way in which

<sup>1</sup> These ants paid an unusually long visit on that occasion, staying with us nearly a fortnight. They took possession of an empty box, where they formed themselves into a mass of more than two cubic feet in size. They always form themselves into such a mass at night-fall, but, on that occasion, they remained night and day in the position they had assumed. Detachments sallied forth from their head-quarters every morning to hunt, and whenever the weather was dry, apertures appeared in the living mass, from which issued a number of ants bearing their eggs, which are nearly as large as themselves. They brought them in again when damp or night came on. They did not molest us in the least, but destroyed the vermin, and seemed to have made their temporary sojourn for the purpose of hatching their eggs; for when they quitted their retreat, the bottom of the box was found to be covered with their white skins or shells. It is a well-known fact, that these ants have many leaders or captains, whose heads and forceps are twice as large as those of the others.



their food is prepared. The Waraus will merely take out the inside of a fish, and without washing, cook and eat it. The Indians generally are perfectly ignorant of our domestic arrangements. On one occasion, having employed an Indian girl to cook some fish, we discovered that she had boiled it in the tea-kettle.

They are strict observers of *hospitality*. When a stranger enters the dwelling of an Indian, he is sure of being entertained by him with the best fare at his command. Food will be set before him, the kasiri drink presented, if paiwari be wanting, and every kindness shown, if his conduct be civil or decent. It is true that the Indian looks upon himself as entitled to a similar reception, but that is no more than just.

They are fond of paying visits to their friends in distant parts of the country. The Indians, in clearing and planting their fields, calculate upon provisions for twelve months. They will probably be absent for three months of the year, on visits to their friends; but nothing is gained thereby, as their friends are sure to pay them a visit in return. In this manner the distant families preserve a connexion with each other, and maintain an extensive knowledge of the country.

They cannot, generally speaking, be commended for *punctuality*. An Indian may promise to come to your settlement next week, but the slightest cause will induce him to put off his visit for one month, or even for three. Time is with them a

matter of no consideration, though so valuable to us. But when a case occurs which imperatively demands punctuality, as when a son leaves his aged parents to go on a journey, he will give them a string with a number of knots in it, one of which is to be untied every morning, and he will arrive, if well, on the day in which the last is untied. I have seen an aged couple regarding with great solicitude the knots on a cord thus left by their only son.

*Theft* is unusual among the Indians. They leave their open houses, with several articles, valuable or useful to them, merely suspended out of the reach of destructive animals, but seldom indeed is anything stolen during their absence. When any such depredation occurs, the Indian thinks that the missing article has been carried off by negroes, or at least, by some other tribe than his own.

The *love of liberty* is deeply implanted in the Indian bosom. An old writer says of those whom they used to capture from other tribes, and sell for slaves—"These kinds of slaves are only for show and parade, as they absolutely refuse to work, and if at all ill-treated, or especially if beaten, they pine and languish like caged turtles, even refusing food, till by affliction and want they are exhausted, and finally expire."

No people upon earth are more *independent* in their way of life. Each man selects the site for his dwelling, which he builds himself, and also makes most of the implements required in hunting and fishing. They love the excitement of the chase,

though it does not always fully supply their wants ; and the successful hunter takes his repose and enjoys himself, without any concern for the artificial comforts which we have learned to value, and unmindful of the wants of the morrow.

We must now consider some of the darker points of the Indian character and habit.

Their *drunkenness* has been already noticed. It is a most melancholy feature. They are not addicted to the systematic dram-drinking practised by millions of Europeans, but to fearful excess at intervals. When they have tasted the intoxicating draught, they seem incapable of moderation. Most of their quarrels spring from this habit, as they then become violent and overbearing. When the Indian is intoxicated, the causes of offence which he may fancy he has against his wife, come into his mind, and he will give her a severe beating. I once heard a Warau woman earnestly beg of a settler " not to give the men rum, or they would surely beat their wives."

Some, who ought to have known and practised better things, have taken delight in making the Indians drunk, either for amusement, or the gratification of their own selfish desires. Of this depravity I have known too many instances, but these practices seem now to be declining, and we trust they may soon entirely cease and be forgotten.

One Indian only have I met with, who before the introduction of Christianity did not drink rum

whenever he could get it. He told me his mother had said to him, "My son, rum has killed many young men whom I have known, and if you drink so much, it will perhaps kill you, and you are my only son." He obeyed the parental warning, and became a respectable man, who has done much for the promotion of Christianity among his people.

Paiwari is said to be much less hurtful than ardent spirits, but its use is, nevertheless, a great evil.

Allusion has been made to the *dances* of the Indians; and the Maquarri and the Owiarri dances of the Arawâks have been already described. In these there is some pretension to order, and a certain degree of gracefulness. But the general dance of the other Indians, if it can be called such, consists chiefly in stamping on the ground, balancing on one foot, and staggering in different attitudes as if intoxicated.

*Polygamy* has been mentioned as the great bane of their domestic life. They live in comfort as long as they are content with one wife, and instances of conjugal attachment are not unfrequent. But as no Indian is restricted in the number of his wives, being allowed to take as many as he wishes for, or can maintain, we frequently find a man possessed of more wives than one. They seem to regard this as a mark of greatness.

A well-known Warau, named Tamenawari, was pointed out to me in 1840 as having *nine* wives. He was reported to be very jealous, and to have

shot one, and cut through the arm of another with a cutlass. He lived too far away for me to investigate the truth of these reports by actual observation, but I believe them to be correct. A settler in our neighbourhood taxed him with his crimes, and threatened to apprehend him. Tamenawari immediately complained of sickness, and took to his hammock, where I visited him; but the next morning he was not to be found, having decamped during the night with all possible celerity and silence. About four years after, he came to the Mission, and attended Divine Service. He was much altered in his appearance, and on my inquiring after his wives, he said he had not one left; that they had all deserted him during a long and dangerous illness, and that he then lived with his son.

It is not an uncommon thing to see an Indian, who has a wife and family of young children, bringing up a little girl, who in a few years will become his second wife. The unhappiness attendant on this practice must be manifest to all, as the first wife will not always tamely submit, for though in a degraded condition, the natural feelings of woman rebel at such cruel treatment; and jealousy and unhappiness, have, in some instances, led to suicide.

I found that the Caribs were continually quarrelling about their wives, and taking them from each other without scruple, the strongest arm prevailing. They sometimes resorted to deadly weapons to make good their claims.



The male relations of the women would sometimes demand payment, before they would consent to give them in marriage, even when the woman was no longer very young. I know two instances, in which the parties were obliged to fly, to avoid the consequence of a stolen match. One of these men told me that he narrowly escaped having his head cleft, by a blow from the brother of the woman whom he had taken.

This custom is a relic of barbarous antiquity. At present, among the Macusis, in the distant interior of the country, the custom of selling each other, even near relatives, prevails; and it is said, that “when a man dies, his wife and children are at the disposal of the eldest surviving brother, who may sell or kill them at pleasure.”<sup>1</sup>

Many of the tribes are indeed very deficient in natural affection. A Carib once demanded three dollars, as the price of his consent to place his orphan nephew at school. He afterwards offered to give up all claim to him, if we would give him a bottle of rum. It is needless to say, that neither demand was complied with. He had previously neglected the boy, who had been brought to me by some well-disposed people of his tribe.

It is evidently wrong to call people among whom these things prevail, *moral* or *virtuous*. Men cannot be strictly moral or virtuous, when unrenewed in the spirit of their minds. Equally incorrect is he who considers that the manners of the Indians

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hancock, *Martin*, p. 52.



“ present an amiable picture of *primæval innocence and happiness.*” From the facts above related, this will be seen to be, in a great measure, a delusive appearance.

But it will appear more strongly, when we consider other customs prevalent among them, especially the system of *revenge*, by which a series of retaliatory murders may be kept up for a long time. Many mysterious ceremonies are said to be observed in discovering a murderer, which as I have not witnessed I cannot pretend to describe. The avenger will track his victim with unrelenting heart. Should he fail in his purpose, it is said that some innocent person related to the supposed murderer, must pay the penalty with his life. In consequence of this practice, the Indians in the interior seldom consider themselves as in perfect safety. Those near the coast apply to the Post-holder, or some influential white man, whose mediation is generally successful.

The *religious belief* of the Indian, in his natural state, has been already noticed. Ages have elapsed since his ancestors gradually forsook God, neglecting to walk with, serve, or worship Him; yet still tradition has handed down a belief in the existence of the Supreme Being, which the observation of nature has confirmed. The reflection of the poet—

“ Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind,”

is, to a certain extent, just. It is from the apparent convulsions and phenomena of nature, such as lightning and thunder, that the Indian forms his

ideas of the *power* of God ; while the growth of his cassava, and the other provisions made for his wants, convince him of his *goodness*. Strange it is, that with such ideas of the Supreme Being, they should seek to inferior spirits, and those of a malignant nature, to avert calamity!

Of these beings, according to their belief, there are more kinds than one. The *yauhahu* and *orehu* of the Arawâks, are objects of faith to the other tribes, though under different names.

The *Yauhahu* are the beings applied to by their sorcerers. They delight in inflicting miseries on mankind. They are believed to be unceasingly active in the pursuit of evil, and to occasion sickness and death. Pain is called, in the poetical idiom of the Arawâks, "*yauhahu simaira*," *the evil spirit's arrow*. This is its general name among them.

While the great Creator, after having formed all things, and established the laws of nature, is believed by the Indians to exist in tranquil bliss, unaffected by the miseries of man, the afflictions occasioned by the *yauhahu* can only be remedied by propitiating the demons themselves.

The men professing to have power to do this, possess, in consequence, immense influence among them. They are, in fact, their priests. Before they are admitted to a knowledge of the mysteries of their profession, they are subjected to an ordeal sufficient to try their fortitude. It is said that they are shut up in one of their enclosed huts, or places of enchantment, for a considerable time, and there obliged to

fast, and drink the juice of tobacco in large quantities. This plant is much used in their mysteries, and is looked upon in consequence as almost sacred.

They must after this observe a strictly regulated diet. They are especially forbidden to eat the flesh of animals not indigenous to the country. To such an extent do some of them carry this abstinence, that I have known a Warau of this class who pretended to eat nothing but vegetables and fresh fish, and who refused to pick up some North American salt fish which had accidentally fallen on the ground, telling his employer that if he did so, it would destroy the power of his future enchantment. These sorcerers are called by the colonists *piai-men*. They are each furnished with a *large gourd* or *calabash*, which has been emptied of its seeds and spongy contents, and has a round stick run through the middle of it by means of two holes. The ends of this stick project; one forms the handle of the instrument, and the other has a long string to which beautiful feathers are attached, wound round it in spiral circles. Within the calabash are a few small white stones, which rattle when it is shaken or turned round. The calabash itself is usually painted red. This instrument is regarded with great awe and superstitious veneration by the heathen Indians, who fear to touch it, or even to approach the place where it is kept.

When attacked by sickness, the Indians cause themselves to be conveyed to some friendly sorcerer, to whom a present of more or less value must be made. Death is sometimes occasioned by these

removals, cold being taken from wet or the damp of the river. If the patient cannot be removed, the sorcerer is sent for to visit him. The females are all sent away from the place, and the men must keep at a respectful distance, as he does not like his proceedings to be closely inspected. He then commences his exorcisms, turning and shaking his "marakka" or rattle, and chanting an address to the yauhahu. This is continued for hours, until, about midnight, the spirit is supposed to be present, and a conversation to take place, which is unintelligible even to the Indians who may overhear it. These ceremonies are kept up for successive nights.

If the patient should survive the disease, the excitement, the noise, and the fumes of tobacco, with which he is at times enveloped, and the sorcerer observes symptoms of recovery, he will pretend to extract the cause of complaint by sucking the part affected. After many ceremonies he will produce from his mouth some strange substance, such as a thorn or a gravel stone, a fish-bone or a bird's claw, a snake's tooth or a piece of wire, which some malicious yauhahu is supposed to have inserted in the affected part. As soon as the patient fancies himself rid of this cause of his illness, his recovery is generally rapid, and the fame of the sorcerer greatly increased.

Should death, however, ensue, the blame is laid upon the evil spirit, whose power and malignity have prevailed over the counteracting charms. Some other sorcerer will at times come in for a share of



Indian Sorcerer





the blame, whom the sufferer has unhappily made his enemy, and who is supposed to have employed the yauhahu in destroying him. The sorcerers being supposed to have the power of causing as well as of curing diseases, by their magical art, they are much dreaded by the common people, who never wilfully offend them. So deeply rooted in the Indian's bosom is this belief concerning the origin of diseases, that they have little idea of sickness arising from other causes. Death may arise from a wound or a contusion, or be brought on by want of food, but in other cases it is the work of the yauhahu.

I once saw a Warau practising his art upon a woman afflicted with a severe internal complaint. He was, when I first saw him, blowing violently into his hands, and rubbing them upon the affected part. I felt compelled to interrupt him, and tell him that his proceedings were bad. He very candidly acknowledged it, put up his implements, and went away. The fate of the poor woman, as it was related to me some time afterwards, was very sad. Though a Venezuelan half-breed, and professedly a Romanist, she was wedded to the Indian superstitions, and after trying the most noted sorcerers without relief, she inflicted a mortal wound on herself with a razor, in the vain endeavour to cut out the imaginary cause of her internal pain.

Some have imagined that these men have faith in the power of their own incantations, from their performing them over their own children, and even causing them to be acted over themselves when sick.

This practice it is indeed difficult to account for. The juggling part of their business is such a gross imposture as could only succeed with a very ignorant and simple people; but it is perhaps in their case, as in some others, difficult to tell the precise point where credulity ends, and imposture begins. It is certain that they are excited during their incantations in a most extraordinary way, and positively affirm that they hold a real intercourse with the evil spirits, nor will they allow themselves to be laughed out of the assertion, however ridiculous it may appear to us.

The Waraus, the most degraded and ignorant of the tribes, are the most noted as sorcerers. The huts which they set apart for the performance of their superstitious rites are regarded with great veneration.

Mr. Nowers, on visiting a Warau settlement, entered one of these huts, not being aware of the offence he was committing, and found it perfectly empty, with the exception of the gourd, or "mataro," as it is called by that tribe. There was in the centre of the hut a small raised place, about eighteen inches high, on which the fire had been made for burning tobacco. Having brought out the gourd, and asked the man to give it to him, he peremptorily refused, saying, "that if he did so, his two children would die the same night."

The sorcerers are generally called upon to confer Indian names upon the children of their tribe. All these names have a meaning. A few may be mentioned, as showing the taste of the Arawâks in this particular. Some are derived from personal

appearance, the hair especially being noticed ; as “ Ka-barra-li,” *having hair* ; “ Ma-barra’-si-li,” *head without hair* ; “ Ka-korri’-si-li,” *curly hair*, &c. One boy whom I knew was called by a name signifying *soft-head*. Some derive their names from birds or other animals, as, “ Koiāli,” the *red and blue macaw*. Others are named after the tobacco, their favourite plant, as, “ Yuri,” *tobacco* ; “ Yuri-banna,” *tobacco-leaf* ; “ Yuri-tokoro,” *tobacco-flower* ; the latter name being often given to a handsome person, generally of the female sex. Others are named from some quality or title, as, “ Ifili,” the *great* ; “ Adaiahu,” the *governor*, &c. A present is given to the priest who names the child.

We have now to consider the *Orehu* ; an important being in the Indian mythology. The *Orehu* is a mysterious female inhabiting the waters. Though not so decidedly malignant as the *Yauhahu*, she is very capricious, and consequently dreaded by the benighted Indian. Her supposed form agrees with that of the mermaid of European fancy ; but she does not confine herself to that alone, for with extraordinary taste she sometimes presents herself above the water with the head of a horse or other animal, as it may suit her fancy, or the object she has in view. She often amuses herself with merely terrifying mankind, but sometimes bears both canoe and people to the bottom.

There is a spot on the banks of the Pomeroon, where the earth, being undermined by the current, has sunk, and the trees which formerly flourished

there remain withered and bare, presenting a desolate appearance. This is supposed to be a favourite resort of the Orehu. Many, especially of the Waraus, if compelled to pass the spot by night, keep close to the opposite bank, and glide with noiseless paddles past the place, where the Orehu is believed to have fixed her abode.

The superstitious belief concerning this being has extended itself to the few negroes who dwell on the rivers of Guiana. During the first few months of my residence, before any Indians attended the infant Mission, I had often observed the terror of the black boy who lived with me, when he perceived a light near the surface of the water. This was merely the lantern-fly, which sometimes flies low. On one occasion, while fishing by moonlight on the stream, in my small canoe, our line was seized by something which we were unable to bring to the surface. The boy cried with terror, and begged me to let the "Watra-mama" (as the negroes call her) take possession of the line, as otherwise she would carry us under water in her anger. The line suddenly snapped, and our hooks were all lost, which compelled us to return home; and he would not venture again on the stream to fish by night.

The Orehu is not always malicious and cruel. On the contrary, she has sometimes exerted herself in a benevolent manner, and is supposed by the Indians to have been the author of that system of sorcery, by which they seek to defend themselves from the attacks of the yauhahu.

An old semi-cici of the Arawâks, who bore the appropriate native name of "Maraka-kore" (*the red-rattle*), became one of our catechumens in 1841. As he was the great oracle in all matters connected with the traditions of his tribe, I used frequently to question him, and derived much curious information, which it was only in the power of an aged man of his class to communicate.

Having one day begged him to tell me what were their real ideas of the origin of their system; after some reluctance, he complied. The following tradition was then delivered in the presence of several persons, and interpreted by John William their chief:—

"In very ancient times, the yauhahu, being unrestrained in their practices, inflicted continual misery on mankind; causing not only great affliction, such as sickness, but perpetual annoyance in other ways, even destroying their food and spoiling their cooking utensils. An Arawâk, named Arawanili, was walking by the water-side, brooding over the condition to which men were reduced, when a female figure, the Orehu, arose from the stream, bearing in her hand a small branch. This she presented to the man, desiring him to plant it, and afterwards gather its fruit. He did so, and thus obtained the calabash, till then unknown among them. She again emerged from the water with small white stones in her hand, which she desired him to enclose in the gourd in the manner before described. After instructing him in the mysteries

of the system of semeci, she again retired to her watery abode. He followed her directions, and became the founder of that system, which has since prevailed among all the Indian tribes."

On inquiring where Arawanili was now, and whether he had not long ago died like other men, the old man said, that according to their belief "he *went up*, and did not die."<sup>1</sup>

When asked if he really in his heart believed the tale, the old man said, that he had firmly believed it before he had heard the word of God. I then asked, if he knew where these events were supposed to have happened. He replied, "Not in this land, but at *Kaieri*," pointing with his hand to the northward. The word *kaieri* literally signifies "an island," but none of them knew by what name the English called the island in question, until the chief, after some reflection, said that the *Christianos* had named it *Trinidad*. The tradition seemed of some importance, as showing that this tribe had in former ages some connexion with the islands, and did not entirely confine their abode to *Terra Firma*.

The above is a picture of the character, habits, and superstitions of the Indians of Guiana, as far as the observations and inquiries of myself and brethren have enabled me to depict them. They are not idolators, nor addicted to human sacrifices and other appalling rites, which disfigure many fair portions of

<sup>1</sup> There is considerable variety in the traditions which the Arawâks have received from their ancestors respecting this person, who seems to have occupied as prominent a place in their mythology, as *Quetzl-coatl* in that of the ancient Mexicans.



the globe ; and their general character is amiable. Still enough has been revealed to show how ignorant they are of all that is really good, pure, and holy. The craft of Satan has led them to forsake the Fountain of good, and to seek intercourse with that which is evil. Something similar to these superstitions was practised among the sinful Jews of old, as we may learn from the expostulation of the Prophet :—

“ When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter ;—should not a people seek unto their God ? ”

## CHAPTER XV.

### DIFFICULTIES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

The various Languages spoken by the Indian Tribes—Examples and Remarks—Other Difficulties—Unhealthiness of some of the River Districts—Second Abandonment of Waramuri.

THE Indian has been taught, from his earliest infancy, to reverence and follow the superstitious practices detailed in our last chapter. He is in consequence attached to them by early training and the force of habit. Believing that he has no other defence against sickness and the various ills of life, he clings to them as his refuge and strength, and only help in time of trouble.

The civilized man may laugh at the absurdity of these ideas, and endeavour to convince him of their folly. But they will endure as long as the Indian race exists, unless something better be given in their stead—unless the void which their rejection occasions, be supplied by the sure and certain hope of the Gospel. Their evil can only be dislodged effectually by the good that is in Christ, whose Spirit and word alone can cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.

Missionary labour among these people has its own peculiar difficulties. It is necessary to an impartial review, that these should be briefly stated.

The first is the difficulty arising from the variety of language. Most of the Indians in the more remote districts are so ignorant of English, as not to know what is said to them in our tongue, unless it be interpreted. The interpreters are little to be depended on, as I have found in too many instances, owing to their ignorance of correct English, which is very different from the jargon acquired from the negroes. Most absurd blunders sometimes occur; and it is not an easy thing, though it may seem so, to correct errors, after they have spread widely and been received for a long time.

The Missionaries in Eastern Polynesia, where the several dialects of the islands spring from one common original, are more highly favoured than those of Guiana. Within forty miles of the Mission in Pomeroon, four Indian languages are spoken, three of which are distinct tongues.

Even the animals and birds of the country are called by different names by the various nations. The jaguar is called by the Arawâks *arua*, by the Waraus *tobi*, and by the Caribs *kaikuci*. In the other words the same difference is observable; for example, the word "good" in Arawâk is *sa* or *isa*, and "bad" is *wakaia*. In the Warau tongue *yakira* is good, and *asida* is bad. The Caribs call good, *idupa*, and bad, *yawami*.

The following short vocabulary will still further

show how distinct the three languages are, and the resemblance between the Caribi and Wacawoio dialects.<sup>1</sup>

ENGLISH.	ARAWAK.	WARAU.	CARIBISI.	WACAWOIO.
<i>Sun</i> . . . .	Adaili.	Ya.	Weyu.	Wiyeyu.
<i>Moon</i> . . . .	Kaci.	Wanika.	Nono.	Nono.
<i>Stars</i> . . . .	Wiwa.	Kora.	Sirigyu.	Irema.
<i>Fire</i> . . . .	Ikihi.	Ekuno.	Wato.	Watu.
<i>Water</i> . . . .	Oniabu.	Ho.	Tona.	Tona.
<i>Rain</i> . . . .	Oini.	Naha.	Konobo.	Konobo.
<i>Stone or</i> }	Siba.	Hoiyo.	Tobo.	Toebo.
<i>Rock</i> . . }				
<i>Sand</i> . . . .	Motogo.	Kahimura.	Sakou.	Sakou.
<i>Island</i> . . .	Kaieri.	Ota-boroho.	Pahu.	Paho.
<i>Man</i> . . . .	Wadili.	Neboro.	Wakuri.	Wino.
<i>Woman</i> . . .	Hiaro.	Tida.	Wori.	Iboite.
<i>(My) Head</i> .	Da'si.	M'aqua.	Yubopo.	Yupopo.
<i>(My) Hand</i> .	Da'kabo.	M'amuho.	Yenari.	Yenaru.
<i>House</i> . . . .	Bawhu.	Hanoko.	Yeaute.	Yeaute.
<i>One</i> . . . . .	Abar.	Isaka.	Oe.	Tigina.
<i>Two</i> . . . . .	Biam.	Manamu.	Oko.	Asagre.
<i>Three</i> . . . .	Kabuin.	Dianamu.	Oroa.	Osorwo.
<i>Four (2)</i> . .	Bibici.	Rabakaia.	Okobaime.	Asagrene.

<sup>1</sup> In this vocabulary and in the other Indian words, the sound of the vowels is that of the Italian language:—*ai* resembles the sound of *i* in *mile*; and *au* resembles the English *ow* in *how*. The consonants have the usual English sound;—*ci* is, however, used to express *che*, as in the word *cheer*. The above orthography has been recommended for adoption by Sir R. Schomburgk.

<sup>2</sup> The Indian method of numeration is peculiar. The first four numbers are expressed by simple words, as in the above table. Five is, in the Arawak, *abar-dakabo*, “my one hand.” Then comes a repetition, *abar-timen*, *biam-timen*, *kabuin-temen*, *bibici-timen*, six, seven, eight, nine. *Biam-dakabo*, “my two hands,” is ten. From ten to twenty they use the toes, (*kuti* or *okuti*,) as *abar-kuti-bana*, eleven; *biam-kuti-bana*, twelve, &c. They call twenty *abar-loko*, or “one man.” They then proceed by men or scores, thus, forty-five is *biam-loko abar-dakabo tajeago*, “two men and one hand added.” For higher numbers they have adopted the hundred and thousand of Europeans. A method of numeration similar to this is used by the Caribs and Waraus, and probably by other tribes.

It will be seen, that the Caribisi and Wacawoio are only different dialects of the same common language, though in some points they vary considerably. This is an important fact in tracing the origin of the various tribes. The words of the Carabisi language are spoken with distinctness, and in a smart vivacious manner.

The other languages are entirely distinct from each other. The Warau is the simplest and most easily acquired; but so very confined, as to be almost incapable of expressing some of the great truths of Christian doctrine. It is somewhat harsh and dissonant.

The language of the Arawâks is the softest of all the Indian tongues. They are proud of it, and boast of its superior beauty, when compared with the dialects spoken by the various tribes around them, from all which it differs essentially. Some resemblance may be traced in the construction of sentences, but this is small, and it seems quite unmixed with any other Indian tongue.<sup>1</sup>

Though deficient in the number of words when compared with our own, the language of the Arawâks is capable of considerable nicety of expression. In some respects it is even copious, as in

<sup>1</sup> There are many words of Spanish origin used by all the Indian tribes. These are the names of objects with which they were unacquainted, previously to their discovery by that nation. Thus they call a goat, *cabaritu*, and a fowl, *karina*, from the Spanish words *cabarita* and *gallina*. Their word for shoe, *sapatu*, is from the Spanish *zapato*, and from the Spanish *arcabúz* comes the word *arakabusa* which the Indians apply to fire-arms.

words expressing relationship, some of which are more strictly definite than with us. As, for instance, in the word brother, we use the same word, *his* or *her brother*; but if the Arawâk is speaking of a *man's* brother, the expression would be either *l'obugici*, his *elder* brother, or *l'augici*, his *younger* brother; but with reference to a *female*, a different word would be used, *t'aciligici*, her brother. This is one of many instances. This language is regularly constructed, and the moods and tenses of its verbs are numerous.

As vowels abound, and the words run much into each other, it is very difficult for a learner to understand what is spoken. The construction of their sentences is totally opposite to our modes of speech. Other striking peculiarities abound, which it is unnecessary to notice here.

The above statement seemed necessary to enable the reader to comprehend the great difficulty presented to the Missionary, by the various languages and dialects spoken by the Indian tribes. As the part of the country frequented by the English is quitted, the people are found to be more and more ignorant of our tongue, and probably some of the tribes will be extinct ere it is generally used.

In addition to this difficulty, the Missionary shares with the parochial minister in the anxieties and disappointments of the pastoral office. Among our converts, those who are led by deep conviction to come forward first of all, and in defiance of their heathen brethren, are generally found to be the



most steady and consistent. Next to these we may, perhaps, reckon those who have been most open and candid in their opposition, when once they see their error and repent. But there are many others who will go with the stream as it ebbs or flows; who will follow the greater number, and when they are in favour of the religion of Christ, will join themselves to really sincere converts as catechumens, and with them receive holy baptism, though destitute of repentance, and wanting a lively faith. After a time the tares begin to show themselves. These things cannot excite surprise. Hypocrisy has been found in every portion of the visible Church; and even among the Apostles one was a Judas.

The most painful case that has occurred among our people, was that of a man who had thus joined himself to other members of his family, and outwardly embraced Christianity. His wife, who appears to have been a sincere person, died soon after, and he then deserted his children to seek another partner. This was about the time of the drought, when all were reduced to great necessity, and his children one after another died from disease, brought on by bad living. The father became afterwards so inveterate against his former Christian companions, from hearing of the manner in which they had spoken of his bad conduct, that he came one morning while they were in Church, and destroyed the plantain-trees which he had before abandoned, and which were then bearing, lest any one should partake of their fruit. This is an

uncommon instance of depravity, to which I have seen no parallel among the Indians.

From the foregoing history, it will be seen that the greatest drawback to our Missions has arisen from the failure of the health of the Missionaries. The cultivated coast of Guiana is cleared and drained, and it enjoys the continual breezes of the trade winds, which coming from the Atlantic Ocean, cool the air, and render it agreeable and healthy. But in that extensive tract of forest land which lies between the coast and the high lands of the interior, the breeze is only felt for a few hours during the day; dense vapours arise at evening, and rest upon the earth till morning, and the vast extent of swampy land fills the air with miasma. Hence have arisen the frequent sickness of the Missionaries, and the compulsory abandonment of their Missions for a time.

The following intelligence, communicated by the Rev. R. L. Webber, is peculiarly distressing. He thus speaks of Waramuri at the close of 1850 :—

“The station has been deserted for three months. Mr. Currie came to town very ill, and has since been more than once given over by his medical attendant. I do not believe that he will ever be able to return thither. He has lost his wife and his only child within the last few months. The situation must, I fear, be very unhealthy.” This is in the highest degree painful, both as it regards the Mission and the affliction of the family.

While the Church estimates as she should the

labours of her Missionary Bishops and Clergy in distant lands, let not the toils and sufferings of her humble catechists be forgotten.

The calamities which have befallen the Mission at Waramuri are not light; and must be regarded as a trial of our faith. The long-continued sickness of Mr. Nowers and his family, and the loss of his child, caused it to lie vacant for two years. This more recent affliction will, perhaps, cause the removal of the Mission to some less promising but more healthy situation, if any such can indeed be found in the country of the Waraus.

Should such be the case, the verdant forest will soon cover the spot where once stood the house of God, and where the departed members of the Mission families await the resurrection morn; but the history of the Mission of Waramuri will not be soon forgotten among those who have worshipped there. The Indian fathers will tell their children of the hundreds of men who assembled and cleared that extensive space, and willingly assisted to build a place of worship, where themselves and families might be taught the religion of Jesus Christ.

While we endeavour faithfully to fulfil our great commission, and do our Master's work, we must leave the event in his hands, and say as he has taught us,

“Thy will be done.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ENCOURAGEMENTS.

Outward Change in the Indians—Attention to Religious Services—Their Dwellings, Industry, Clothing, &c.—Respectable appearance of Christian Indian Congregations—Comfort afforded by the Christian Religion to the Sick and Dying—The Burial-Ground—Amelioration in the Condition of the Female Sex—Indian Marriage Feast—The Rattles of the Sorcerers given up—Condition of our Missions at the close of 1850.

THAT a considerable change has taken place in the course of a few years among the Indians in the neighbourhood of the Missions in Guiana, is evident to all acquainted with them.

When Mr. Waterton wrote the account of his third journey, not many years ago, he expressed his belief, that “not a single Indian in *ci-devant* Dutch Guiana could read or write.”<sup>1</sup> At present there are many that can do both.

These acquirements are, however, of secondary importance, and perfectly compatible with immorality and irreligion. But there are many of our people, of whose spiritual condition we have every cause to think well; and it is indeed impossible that they should travel so many miles to attend the ordinances of religion, if they did not value them highly.

<sup>1</sup> Wanderings, p. 203.

Neither savage nor civilized man will voluntarily take great pains and labour to follow that which is indifferent to him. Our prayers, morning and evening, at the Missions, are regularly attended, and regarded as a privilege. When obliged to leave the Mission at three in the morning, in order to have the tide in our favour when going on a long voyage, I have frequently known both men and women voluntarily leave their hammocks in order to join in the prayers which were offered before embarking, though none but my crew were required or expected to do so.

We can only judge of men's hearts by their actions, as we know the tree by its fruit. They who were formerly unclad, now clothe themselves from head to foot, and while the heathen of both sexes may be seen moving about the public roads on the coast in a state of almost perfect nudity, an Arawâk Christian female would no more think of appearing in such a state than would an English-woman. At the Missions they also provide themselves with better houses. A few posts supporting a roof were formerly all that was thought necessary, but now the Mission cottages have sides, doors, window-shutters, and frequently a boarded floor. Tables and benches are now used, whereas a block of wood was once deemed sufficient, with the hammock.

Many families are also provided with washing tubs, irons, &c. ; and it is pleasing to see a group of busy females occupied in preparing the clean apparel for themselves and families against the Sabbath. Shoes



and stockings are worn by many on that day, although they go with bare feet during the rest of the week. These pleasing effects are solely to be attributed to the introduction of the Gospel, with its handmaids, industry and temperance.

At a meeting of the Diocesan Association of the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*, held at Georgetown, 28, Feb. 1844, the Hon. H. S. F. Young thus spoke of the existing Missions:—

“Of the Missions of Bartica and of the Pomer-  
roon, it may be said almost without a figure of  
speech, ‘the wilderness and the solitary place are  
glad, and the desert is rejoicing and blossoming as  
the rose.’ Of the Pomeroon I have been informed,  
on the authority of one who was formerly a trader  
in the products of the forests of that river, that the  
employment in which hundreds and hundreds of  
negroes were formerly engaged is now filled by  
Indians; the negroes have left the river, and there  
are at this moment more Indian labourers than  
persons willing to employ them. From the river  
the Indians have travelled to the coast. A magis-  
trate some time ago reported, that he had great  
satisfaction in stating, that he was told they were  
performing their work most satisfactorily.”

This proves that an Indian when *led* and *not driven*, both *can* and *will* work.

In the following year, when the Indians had finished their great undertaking at Waramuri, sixty men immediately left the new Mission, to labour for a time on the coast, in order to provide clothing for



themselves and families. For the Indian who has attended a place of worship *once*, immediately feels that he must dress himself decently, or go there no more.

It may not be amiss to endeavour to give the reader some idea of the gradual change of Indian taste in this respect. The first European garment which the wild man of the woods procures is generally a shirt. This he wears till it is ready to drop off; then he buys a new one, which he puts on over the other, to appear in at Church. It frequently happens that the new one is shortest, and the extremity of the other by no means becoming. I have sometimes seen a Carib content himself with a waistcoat, and with no other covering than his native cloth, strut about with some degree of vanity. By degrees, example and persuasions have their effect, and he appears clothed from top to toe.

The belle of the forest, whose only attire has been composed of beads, with a few ornaments of silver and the teeth of the jaguar, when she begins to assume an attire suitable to our ideas of decency, shows more avidity to possess clothes than taste in putting them on. The Caribi women seemed, at first, to think they never could wear clothing enough. The face, hands, and bare feet alone were visible, the rest appearing a confused heap of printed cotton, handkerchiefs, &c. of the most glaring and showy patterns. The love of ornament, natural to them, then displayed itself in large earrings, &c. of some spurious imitation of gold or silver. I was once

obliged gently to caution them against this, and the next Sabbath all the earrings had disappeared, except one pair. The Arawâk females are very neat in their apparel on the Sabbath.

This neatness of dress in the converts of that tribe was very apparent among the people of Ituribisi who have attended Christian instruction. There are, probably, none of the Aborigines of America who exceed them in this respect. It was particularly observable in the young Indians of both sexes who in 1848 attended the consecration of the parish Church of St. John.

The like improvement has taken place at the Missions on the rivers, as in those districts which are near the coast. Such was the case at Bartica, as I witnessed several years ago : and even in those parts which are more remote from civilized life, the same change is observable. The Bishop of Guiana thus describes his feelings at beholding the congregation proceeding by water, from the Mission village in Pomeroon to the chapel, on Sunday morning :—

“ In many parts of Guiana we can only meet the roving Indian, travelling more like one of the brute creation than an intellectual being ; but where the message of salvation has been heard and felt, there, as if by a charm, civilization with its attendant graces immediately succeeds. I shall not forget the grateful spectacle of more than twenty canoes, filled with well-dressed Indians of both sexes, with the beaming intelligence of their little ones, as they followed in order the Mission bateau in which we

were sitting ; not without satisfaction at the sight which they themselves presented, and yet evidently feeling the sacred occasion which called it forth. I felt that on the dark waters of the river I might never be permitted to witness a more comely train than was presented on that occasion."

In order to see the benefit which Christianity confers upon the Indian, his character and condition require to be closely observed. Very different are these in reality from the picture formed in the imaginative mind. Primeval happiness is not the portion of the Indian any more than of the civilized man. His vices and his wants, though few, necessarily destroy it. It is a mistake to suppose that the life of heathen man is or can be one of happiness, however favourable the country and climate in which he dwells. The "noble savage" running "wild in woods," is a poetical idea ; and there is a charm in the wild freedom of a life in the woods, and considerable enjoyment to a young and healthy person, in managing the light canoe, or pursuing his game through the forests. But it is *animal* enjoyment merely, and instantly fades under the pressure of hunger, and at the approach of sickness. When the Indian becomes sick, he has no comfort, no consolation ; his superstition teaches him that his sickness and pain are occasioned by the tormenting presence of an evil spirit ; while of the Supreme Being, as the God that heareth prayer, he knows nothing. When the pretended sorcerer whom he has summoned, fails to relieve him by his incan-

tations, he finds himself shunned by his friends, who fear lest they should be the next victims. It is from this cause that the Indians are called unfeeling to each other in cases of sickness. They are, when better taught, kind and affectionate; but superstition in this, as in other things, hardens the heart. But it is in the hour of sickness, and pain, and sorrow, that the true comfort of the religion of Jesus is felt. The assurance that affliction is sent by a loving Father to bring us nearer to himself, and that "through the grave and gate of death we may pass to a joyful resurrection," is equally consoling to the Indian dying in his hammock, as to the white man in his bed. The Christian Indians pray with each other when sick, and send for their minister, instead of summoning the sorcerer to exorcise the yauhahu. Much excellent feeling of this kind may sometimes be witnessed.

Some years ago we lost one of our most steady converts by the bite of a labaria snake. He was called Hendrick Yankè. While following his game through the forest, he placed his foot close to the reptile without perceiving it, and it immediately struck him with its poisonous fangs. I saw him three days after this event; he was in great torture, his foot, leg, and the whole of his right side being inflamed and swollen to an enormous size. He said that he shot the snake as soon as he perceived it, and that a dark cloud then came before his eyes. After some time he recovered sufficiently to crawl to his house, which was close by. He thought that as

he had survived so many hours, he might recover, but expressed his resignation to the will of God.

He did apparently recover, and was able to get about; but the poison had thoroughly tainted his blood, and he soon began to droop. He went to seek medical assistance, but it was of no avail. A large abscess formed on each side of his spine; and he soon began to show signs of approaching dissolution. He then came to the Mission, where all manifested much feeling for him. He expressed his faith in Christ, and submission to the Divine will, though the tears stood in his eyes as he looked on his infant family. He died eight months after he had received the bite.

His only surviving brother was bitten by a labaria soon after. He was, with another Indian, hunting far from home; and when the accident occurred, his companion, being unable to carry him, slung his hammock between two trees, placed him in it, and hastened to seek assistance. All night did the poor sufferer lie there exposed to the perils of the forest, yet still survived. The next day his friends arrived, and bore him to his house by means of a pole, to which his hammock was tied. The grief of his aged parents was excessive. They often begged of me to tell them, if I could, whether "this, their *last* son, would die." He was, like his departed brother, a Christian, seemed much comforted when visited, and had the holy Sacrament administered to him. A strong decoction of sarsaparilla seemed, by God's blessing, to produce a favourable change. The punc-



ture of the serpent's fang was almost imperceptible; but a sloughing ulcer formed about an inch from it, which continued to discharge for many weeks; after which he recovered his health, and was quite well when I quitted the country.

A bamboo grove at the back of the hill had been set apart as a burial-ground; and one of the first who was there interred was the poor victim of the labaria snake. A post of hardwood was erected at the head of his grave by his brother, bearing the initials "H. Y." By his side rest the mortal remains of the young woman who set a good example, some years before, by refusing to be given in marriage to a man who had another wife. Several other Christian Arawâks are buried there.

Close by rests the body of the wife of the Caribi chief, which was borne to the grave by her husband and son, who wept as the burial service was read over it. Jane, a beautiful little Caribi girl, also lies buried there. She was one of our best scholars, and when taken ill at her parents' house, desired them to bring her to the Mission. Her earnest request was refused by her heathen relatives, who trusted to their superstitions to recover her. When these had failed, they brought her body to the Christian burial-ground, accusing themselves. They delivered up her well-thumbed Testament, which we preserve as a relic of a most amiable and excellent child, who was in mercy early removed from the temptation of evil example.

The scenes which we have witnessed at these graves



have been sufficient to convince us that the heart of the red man is as susceptible of tender emotion as that of the white, when freed from the freezing influence of superstitious fear.

Nor is it only with respect to the treatment of the sick, and in regard to the dead, that the ameliorating influence of Christianity is felt: it enters into every relation of life, and is especially seen in the treatment of the weaker sex. Polygamy is of course prevented by Christianity. When a man professing the faith of Christ, has, before God and in the presence of the congregation of the people of his tribe, vowed to keep to one wife, he cannot draw back without utter and shameful apostasy. From that time his wife feels more safe in her position, and is delivered from the constant apprehension of a future rival. Well, then, may the Indian women say of Christian matrimony, "It is a good thing."

They are better treated by their husbands. The heathen Indians use their wives very hardly; and it is nothing unusual to see Warau and Caribi women paddling the canoes, while their husbands amuse themselves with a stroke now and then. But under the Gospel, woman resumes her natural place, and though still obliged to work hard, it is only in what she considers her appropriate duties. It is only in a case of emergency that a Christian Indian expects his wife to paddle. She still plants the fields, and bears the best part of the household utensils to and from the canoe. This seems to us a hardship in some degree, but they do not consider

it as such. Customs vary in different countries. I once desired a man to take a bunch of plantains off his wife's head and carry it himself. He did so with a smile ; but his wife seemed ashamed at what she considered a degradation of her husband. She seemed to feel much as the wife of an English labourer would feel, who should see her husband obliged by some oppressive tyrant to scrub the floor, or wash the clothes of the family. Still there is a gradual amendment taking place in the condition of the Indian women, who are no longer regarded as mere servile beings.

A marriage was always regarded as a great event at the Mission, and a feast was usually given by the friends of the parties. On these occasions we received the primitive invitation, "Come and see us eat bread." In the evening a large party might be seen respectably dressed, and seated with much decorum round two or three large tables, on which were placed a tureen and several large bowls, filled with game and vegetables. A *ham*, which had been purchased on the coast for the occasion, seemed the greatest dainty. The Minister was requested to ask a blessing. The guests were furnished with plates and knives, and most of them with forks ; but they were rather dangerous to some, as from constant habit the hand went to the mouth, while the prong of the fork threatened the eye. Contrary to heathen usage, the women were admitted to share the feast, but were all seated at one end of the table ; till an amendment was gradually

effected, and they then took their seats by their husbands. This was a serious innovation upon their old customs. When the plates, &c. were removed, coffee was handed round by young men and women, who, having lived in civilized families, seemed to feel great delight in waiting on their own people on such occasions. After their tables had been twice or thrice filled with adults, they were again furnished, and the school children entertained, whose mirth and liveliness formed a strong contrast to the looks of grave importance with which their elders had gone through a scene so novel to them. The expenses of these feasts were all borne by the people themselves. We found pleasure in lending earthenware, candlesticks, &c., but everything else was furnished by the Indians. The Arawâks generally invited some of their Caribi brethren, which was a compliment that seemed to be duly appreciated, and strengthened the good feeling existing between the tribes.

What a contrast did these entertainments, at which no intoxicating drink was used, present to the frantic gestures, shrieks, wild whoopings, and intoxication of the Maquarri and other dances! As some of them remarked, "Our former dances round a canoe filled with paiwari were wicked and foolish, but we are now more happy."

The system of sorcery, with its pernicious effects, has received a severe blow by the introduction of Christianity. Many still follow it, but it must recede as light advances.

Some of our first converts were of the class of conjurors or Piai men. Two of them in Pomeroon had broken their marakkas, or sacred rattles, before joining the new religion. Others surrendered theirs as pledges of their sincere renunciation of the practice. Five of these gourds have come into my possession at different times ; some of which were hung up in the Mission school, and thus exposed to the contempt of the young people, who soon learned to laugh at and despise their pretended power. Occasionally some heathen stranger, who had paid us a visit, has suddenly been seized with a degree of nervous apprehension, at finding himself in close proximity to such dreaded instruments. The other gourds were sent to England, and two of them have been presented to the Missionary College of St. Augustine at Canterbury.<sup>1</sup>

The old man who related to me their tradition concerning the Orehu, was the first who gave up his rattle. He and all his family have been baptized ; and it was for years a pleasing sight to see him, with his children and grandchildren, come to the Lord's table, supporting his feeble steps by a staff.

The Missions whose history has been detailed in the foregoing pages, were all in a flourishing condition at the conclusion of the year 1850, with the exception of Waramuri, the fate of which has been related, and which was then vacant. The number

<sup>1</sup> By the Rev. T. Medland of Steyning, an excellent friend of our Indian Missions in Guiana, to whom I had sent them.



Indian Mission at the Hill, Pomeroon, 1846.







of Indians baptized is now very great. At the Pomeroon there were sixty-eight on the school list, and the Sabbath school was well attended, both by adults and children. His Excellency H. Barkly, Esq. the able Governor of the colony, had lately visited that station, arriving at night, but having received some afflicting intelligence from Georgetown, was compelled to leave instantly, having only taken a partial and torch-light review of the assembled Indians. In a second visit, his Excellency was accompanied by Mrs. Barkly, and they expressed themselves much gratified by what they saw.

The other Missions were progressing, with more or less prospect of a steady increase.

At the Mahaiconi there were from forty to sixty children at the school, and the consistent conduct of many of the elder Indians gives every hope that our labour in that quarter has not been in vain in the Lord.

We must now conclude our narrative. While looking forward with humble hope for an extension of Gospel light in Guiana, we desire to express our thankfulness for mercies past, and to say,

“Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### EARLY HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE INDIANS.

Difficulty of tracing the Origin of the barbarous Tribes of America—The Macusis—The Waraus—Early Accounts of the Caribs—Their Discovery in the Islands—Supposed Origin—The Wacawoios—The Arawâks—Accounts of early Discoverers—Traditions of that Tribe—Of the Spaniards—Of their Contests with the Caribs—Struggles of Indians with the early Colonists, and with the revolted Negroes—Present Blessings.

To trace the early history of the aboriginal tribes of America is a task of great difficulty. Though learned men have exercised their talents in laborious research, some degree of obscurity still rests upon the origin of those nations which were the most civilized, and have left the most durable monuments; the Toltecs and Aztecs of the northern portion of that continent, and the once flourishing kingdom of Cuzco in the south.

And if this is the case with respect to the races who built the teocallis of Cholula and ancient Mexico, and with those who raised the temples and formed the roads and hanging bridges of Peru, we cannot expect to learn much of the origin and early history of wild and wandering tribes, such as those who are to be found in Guiana.

It is impossible to say how long that extensive country has been inhabited—who were its earliest settlers—or from what quarter they came. It may have afforded subsistence to savage and wandering tribes for thousands of years; or it may not have possessed a single inhabitant, till within a century or two of its discovery by Europeans. The whole continent of America seems to have been overspread by successive races from the north, who succeeded each other as wave follows wave, the weak giving place to the strong. And in Guiana, the most pleasant and fertile spots have, probably, changed masters more than once, as one horde of barbarians made room for another still more warlike and cruel. The settlement of Europeans on the banks of the Orinoco and Amazon, and their tributaries, during the last three centuries, may have increased the number of the tribes within our present colony, by causing others to take refuge where they could find a place free from the hated presence of the Spanish and Portuguese intruders, and the descimentos with which they laid waste their villages.<sup>1</sup>

As these Indians had no written languages, nor means of recording past events, their early history can only be gathered from the accounts of those who first discovered them; from their own imperfect traditions; from the investigation of their languages; or an examination of their monumental relics. There is, perhaps, no country more destitute of the last than

<sup>1</sup> The descimentos are expeditions for the purpose of attacking the Indian villages, and reducing their inhabitants to slavery.

Guiana. A few engravings on a rock have been found some distance up the Essequibo, and described by travellers, but they are not considered to be of importance.

The MACUSIS, at present the most numerous tribe in the interior, are supposed to have formerly inhabited the banks of the Orinoco. Sir R. Schomburgk considers them to be the ancient Orenoque-poni, a tribe mentioned by Sir Walter Raleigh, with whom he had intercourse during his expedition up the Orinoco in 1595. *Pona*, in the Macusi language, signifies *upon, on*; and Raleigh tells us, that this nation called themselves by that name, because they bordered the great river Orenoque.<sup>1</sup> They probably retired at an early period to the territory which they now possess, as they were little fitted to withstand the encroachments of the Spanish. Being industrious and unwarlike, they have been attacked by every savage tribe around them. The Wapisianas are supposed to have driven them northward, and to have taken possession of part of their country. The Brazilians have long been in the habit of enslaving them, as well as the Caribs, Wacawoios, and other Indian tribes. They have been settled where they are at present found, one hundred years at least, and probably much longer.

The WARAUS are also an unwarlike though hardy

<sup>1</sup> “The names of several rivers, points, islands, and settlements along the Orinoco, are decidedly Macusi; and Raleigh in his discovery of Guiana, mentions the names of rivers, villages, and chieftains, which are of the same origin.”—Schomburgk’s remarks on the Languages and Dialects of the Indian tribes inhabiting Guiana.

people, and probably in ancient times took up their abode on the muddy and uninviting shores of Guiana, in consequence of having been compelled by the fate of war to relinquish a more pleasant territory. It is difficult to conceive how any people could have settled there by choice.

The Tivitivas mentioned by Raleigh, were probably a branch of the Warau nation. They are described by him as a hardy people, dwelling among the islands formed by the channels of the Orinoco, which, being low and flat, were exposed to frequent inundations.

From the degraded condition of the Waraus, and their total want of national pride, there is little to be gleaned from them respecting their ancient history. They have lived in their present state for the last three centuries at least, and have always been despised by the other nations. They were frequently attacked by the Caribs and Wacawoios, who seem to have browbeaten and enslaved them almost at their pleasure. At present, however, a much better feeling prevails; many Caribs in the Manawarin are intimate with the Waraus, and have even intermarried with them.

We know more of the CARIBI nation than of the others, and there is, perhaps, no race equally uncivilized which has engaged more attention. This is owing, not only to their being the second race discovered in the New World, but also to their ferocity and warlike spirit, and their widely extended ravages.

The mild and hospitable people, discovered by Columbus in his first voyage in 1492, then inhabited the Lucayo Islands, or Bahamas, together with the extensive islands of Cuba, Hayti, Jamaica, and Porto Rico. They probably possessed originally the whole of the islands, from Florida to the coast of Paria on the southern continent. Being mild and peaceful, they engaged in war with reluctance, and could scarcely maintain possession of the islands where they were most numerous and powerful. In Porto Rico and in Hayti, they were exposed to continual attacks from the Caribs, and a part of the latter island was under the power of Caonabo, a Caribi chief, when discovered by the Spaniards.

In his second voyage, 1493, Columbus discovered the Caribi Islands, so called from their inhabitants. This beautiful group of islands extends almost in a semicircle, from the eastern end of Porto Rico to the coast of South America. They are called by some the Antilles.

The appearance and habits of the Caribs then discovered, correspond with those of that tribe afterwards found in Guiana. While cruising among the islands, their discoverer had many proofs of the spirit of this people. He found that they went on predatory expeditions in their canoes, to the distance of 150 leagues. Their arms were clubs, with bows and arrows, pointed with the bones of fishes, and poisoned. They attacked the other islands and the mainland; carried off the women as slaves or companions, and made prisoners of the men to be killed



and eaten. With all their ferocity they paid considerable attention to agriculture, and brought home with them valuable plants and seeds from the countries which they overran.

The Spaniards had evidence of the cannibalism of this savage race. They found at Turuqueira, or Guadaloupe, human limbs suspended to the beams of the houses ; and the head of a young man recently killed, some parts of whose body were roasting before the fire, and others boiling with the flesh of geese and parrots.<sup>1</sup>

They had soon after proof of the courage and ferocity of the Caribs at the island of Ayay, or Santa Cruz. A canoe came round the island and approached the ships. The Caribs in it were so amazed at beholding them, that they allowed their retreat to be cut off by a Spanish bark, with twenty-five men. When they at length perceived this, they attacked them with undaunted courage, discharging their arrows with amazing force and rapidity. The women in the canoe fought as well as the men, and one of them sent an arrow completely through a Spanish buckler. Their canoe being overturned, some got upon sunken rocks, and others used their bows with great dexterity while swimming in the sea ; nor was it without great difficulty that they could be overpowered and taken.<sup>2</sup>

The hair of these savages was coarse and long,

<sup>1</sup> Irving's *Life of Columbus*, book vi. chap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson's *Hist. of America*, note 95. Irving's *Columbus*, book vi. chap. 3.

their eyes were encircled with paint, so as to give them a hideous expression ; and bands of cotton were bound tightly round their limbs, causing them to swell to a disproportionate size. This description would apply, almost as well, to the Caribs inhabiting Guiana, who have been equally accused of cannibalism,—whose ferocity has been noted,—who still paint their faces and bodies,—and whose women continue to wear the “sapuru,” or bands of cotton tightly fixed on their limbs.

These enterprising and barbarous islanders had a tradition, that their ancestors came originally from some part of the continent, and having conquered and exterminated the original inhabitants of those islands, had taken possession of their lands and of their women. They are said to have had a particular connexion with Guiana, so close indeed that they imagined themselves to have come from thence.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding this idea of the Caribs themselves, it is generally supposed that they originally came from the northern continent.<sup>2</sup> An eminent writer thus speaks of them :—

“The traditional accounts of their origin, though of course extremely vague, yet are capable of being verified to a great degree by geographical facts, and open one of the rich veins of curious inquiry and speculation which abound in the New World. They are said to have migrated from the remote valleys embosomed in the Apalachian mountains. The

<sup>1</sup> Raynal's Hist. of the Indies, book x. p. 27. Rochefort, 348.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, note 96.

earliest accounts we have of them represent them with weapons in their hands, continually engaged in wars, winning their way and shifting their abode, until in the course of time they found themselves at the extremity of Florida. Here, abandoning the northern continent, they passed over to the Lucayos,<sup>1</sup> and thence gradually, in process of years, from island to island of that vast and verdant chain which links, as it were, the end of Florida to the coast of Paria on the southern continent. The archipelago extending from Porto Rico to Tobago, was their stronghold, and the island of Guadaloupe, in a manner, their citadel. Hence they made their expeditions, and spread the terror of their name through all the surrounding countries. Swarms of them landed upon the southern continent, and overran some parts of terra firma. Traces of them have been discovered far in the interior of that vast country through which flows the Orinoco. The Dutch found colonies of them on the banks of the Ikouteka, which empties into the Surinam, along the Esquibi, the Maroni, and other rivers of Guiana, and in the country watered by the windings of the Cayenne; and it would appear that they extended their wanderings to the shores of the southern ocean, where, among the aboriginals of Brazil, were some who called themselves Caribs,

<sup>1</sup> They do not appear to have permanently settled in the Lucayos, as those islands were inhabited by a race speaking the language of Cuba and Hayti when first discovered. The men used as interpreters by Columbus in the other islands were taken from thence.

distinguished from the surrounding Indians by their superior hardihood, subtlety and enterprise.”<sup>1</sup>

If this account of their origin be correct, the WACAWOIOS, whose language points them out as descended from the same parent stock as the Caribs, are probably a colony who at a more early period passed through the islands, and overran Guiana. The variety which subsists in their language may easily be accounted for, not only by difference of locality, but also by the gradual admission of other words, by their taking as wives the women of conquered tribes on the mainland. From the same cause, probably, arose a gradual change of character, their reputed treachery and habits of poisoning, which contrast strongly with the more open character of the Caribs, who mingled with the original island race.<sup>2</sup>

The Caribs in the islands were gradually exterminated by the Europeans who chose to settle there. As they had expelled the aboriginal Indians, so now they were themselves expelled by a race, against whom their wild bravery was of little service. The

<sup>1</sup> Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*, book vi. chap. 3. The opinion that the tribes of Guiana, known as Caribs and Wacawoios, are the former inhabitants of the Lower Antilles, is held by Sir R. Schomburgk, who also considers that we are to look for the origin of these races to Florida, Texas, and the eastern foot of the Rocky Mountains.

<sup>2</sup> From the union of the Caribs with the women of the conquered islanders, arose a distinction of dialect between the two sexes in the Caribi Islands. “The language of the men had nothing common with that spoken in the large islands. The dialect of the women considerably resembled it.”—Labat. 129. Robertson, note 96.

bow and arrow were no match for the musket, nor the war-club for the sword. At St. Christopher's, in 1625, two thousand Caribs perished in battle, whilst their European invaders lost one hundred men.<sup>1</sup> In the other islands their losses were equally great. These calamities would cause a migration of the natives when they found it useless to fight any more. Some of the islands, as Martinico, were suddenly abandoned by them, after a fierce but unavailing struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Those of the Caribs who chose to forsake the islands entirely, would naturally take refuge with their brethren already settled in Guiana, and by their valour secure to themselves such portions of the country as they might think proper to occupy ; as few tribes would be able, or indeed dare, to oppose them.

A remnant of the Caribs still remained at St. Vincent, and they were transported about the end of the last century to the island of Ruattan in the bay of Honduras.<sup>3</sup>

The ARAWÂKS next claim attention. They were a maritime tribe ; occupying, when first discovered, the country about the mouths of the Orinoco, and extending far along the coast to the eastward of that river, where they are at present found.

The third voyage of Columbus, in 1498, brought him to the coast of the southern continent. He

<sup>1</sup> Martin's West Indies, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Abbé Raynal, book xiii.

<sup>3</sup> Martin's West Indies, p. 285.



first discovered the island of Trinidad, and sailed along its southern shore, until he arrived at the mainland, and cast anchor before the narrow strait which divides it from that island, near one of the mouths of the Orinoco.

Hitherto he had seen nothing of the natives ; but a canoe with twenty-five men now approached from the shore, who rested on their paddles at some distance, and hailed the ships. They were all young men, well formed, and naked, except bands and fillets of cotton about their heads, and cloths of the same about their loins. Their arms were bows and arrows, the latter feathered, and pointed with bone. They had also bucklers, which had not hitherto been seen among the natives of the New World ; but which seem to have been in use among the tribes inhabiting this part of the continent.

The admiral, wishing to attract them, made his ship-boys dance on deck, while the men sang to the sound of the tabor. But this had quite the contrary effect, for the Indians mistook it for the war-dance, and seizing their bows and bucklers, discharged a flight of arrows ; and this being answered by the Spanish cross-bows, they took to flight.

Notwithstanding this repulse, they readily approached a smaller ship, and running under the stern, entered into a parley with the pilot, who made their chieftain a present of a cap and mantle. Being delighted with these, he invited the Spaniard to accompany him to land, giving him to understand that he should be well entertained and receive large



presents in return. But when the pilot went in his boat to ask the admiral's permission, the Indians, fearing treachery, darted off in their canoe, and were no more seen.

The following circumstance, mentioned by Raleigh, probably occurred at this interview. Speaking of the mistakes which are made respecting the names of hitherto unknown regions, from the ignorance of their discoverers of the language of those with whom they communicate, he says, "The same happened to the Spaniard in asking the name of the island Trinidad ; for a Spaniard demanding the name of that self place which the sea encompassed, they answered 'Caeri,' which signifieth *an island*."<sup>1</sup> As the word "Caeri," or "Kaieri," in the language of the Arawâks, signifies *an island*, it was probably with that nation that Europeans first held intercourse on the shores of the southern continent of America. This is also confirmed by the locality, as the interview took place nearly opposite one of the mouths of the Orinoco.

No further communication with the natives took place, until the ships had passed through the formidable strait, and entered the Gulf of Paria. They then had intercourse with the people, who resembled in dress and appearance the party first met at the mouth of the Gulf. They were intelligent, frank, and affable in their manners, and treated their visitors most hospitably. They were armed with bows, arrows, and bucklers, and the men wore cotton cloths

<sup>1</sup> Raleigh's History of the World, book i. chap. 8. sect. 15.

about their heads and loins, and collars and burnished plates about their necks of an inferior kind of gold. The females were unclothed, but wore necklaces and bracelets of valuable pearls, which were brought from the northern coast of Paria. These they readily exchanged for hawk's-bells or any article of brass, which they seemed to value highly, smelling it and using the word "Turey," which their visitors considered to mean "come from the skies." Though the Spaniards could not understand their language, yet it probably bore considerable resemblance to that of Hayti and the larger West Indian islands, as the same word "Turey" was always used by the people of the latter, when they received anything which called forth their wonder and admiration, and which they considered to have come from heaven. It is probable that the people of these islands and those of the continent were intimately connected, before the Caribs gained possession of the smaller islands lying between them. Perhaps they were both branches of one parent stock.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of the mainland possessed

<sup>1</sup> The language of the Loko, or Arawâk tribe, seems to possess considerable affinity to that spoken by the aborigines of the Lucayo and other islands. The few words of the latter whose meanings are given in the works of English authors, will show this resemblance.

The word *ciba*, in the language of Hayti, signified a certain "stone." (Irving's Columbus, book vi. ch. 5.) *Cibao*, which was the name of a rocky district in that island, is said also to signify a "stone," and is evidently derived from the other. The Arawâks call a stone *siba*, and have given that name to a well-known rocky place on the banks of the Demerara.

*Bohio* was the word used by the people of Cuba, to express the populousness of Hayti. (Book iv. ch. 4.) It has been said to mean a "house," ("cottages" according to some.) It seems to be identical

canoes capable of accomplishing distant voyages, which had cabins in the centre for the accommoda-

with the Arawâk phrase *bohio* or *bohyo*, a common abbreviation of *bawhũ-yũho*, "house many," a term always used to denote a place where there are many human habitations.

By the word *Cubanacan* was designated a province in the centre of Cuba, '*nacan*, in their language, signifying "the midst." (Book iv. ch. 3.) The Arawâks use the word *anaca n* in a similar sense; *anaka bo n* signifying "in the midst."

*Agi*. This was the name of the pepper of the Indians, which the Spaniards learned from the people of Hayti to use as an important article of food. (Book v. ch. 2.) The Arawâks call pepper *aci* or *achi*.

The *guana* was first discovered in the islands, and so called by the natives. The Arawâks usually call it *yuana*.

The islanders believed in the Supreme Being, but like the Indians of Guiana, addressed themselves to inferior deities. These they called *Cemi* or *Zemi*, and the priest who consulted them was called *butio*. To this last title I have been unable to discover any resemblance in the language of the Arawâks, but the word *semi-cici*, by which they call their sorcerers, seems to be derived from the *ceci* or *zemi* of the islanders. In many points their character and office exactly correspond; as may be seen from the following account of the priests or sorcerers of Hayti:—

"They practised rigorous fasts and ablutions, and inhaled the powder or drank the infusion of a certain herb, which produced a temporary intoxication or delirium. In the course of this process, they professed to have trances and visions, and that the zemi revealed to them future events, or instructed them in the treatment of maladies. They were in general great herbalists, and well acquainted with the medicinal properties of trees and vegetables. They cured diseases by their knowledge of simples, but always with many *mysterious rites and ceremonies* and *supposed charms*, *chanting* and *burning a light* in the chamber of the patient, and pretending to *exorcise* the malady, to expel it from the mansion, and to send it to the sea or to the mountain."—Irving's Columbus, book vi. ch. 10. Oviedo. Cronic. lib. v. cap. 1.

There are also other words in which more or less resemblance may be traced between the dialect of those islanders and that of the Arawâks of Guiana.

The word *biana* "two" used by the Caribs in Dominica, was probably a relic of the language of the original inhabitants of that island, preserved by the women taken as wives by the Caribs after their conquest. It is also a pure Arawâk word.

tion of their chiefs and their families; and those of the islands were not behind them in this respect, as we learn from the account of the canoes found at Jamaica, which were of great size, and ornamented with carving and painting. One of them which was measured, was ninety-six feet long and eight broad, though hollowed out of a single tree.

The Arawâks seem to have been, at an early period, numerous and powerful. They have been called by some a nation of Caribs,<sup>1</sup> but they are of a different race, possessing a totally distinct language, as has been already shown.

As they dwelt on the north-eastern coast of the southern continent, the Caribs from the islands continually attacked them. Those of Tobago, being near the mainland, were particularly troublesome. After a long and desperate struggle,<sup>2</sup> the Caribs were beaten, and finally obliged to leave that island to avoid the pursuit of the Arawâks. They withdrew to St. Vincent's and the neighbouring islands,<sup>3</sup> from whence expeditions against the mainland continually issued, which called at Tobago to refresh themselves on their way.<sup>4</sup>

Sir Walter Raleigh, in the account of his expedition to Guiana in 1595, mentions his meeting with some Arawâks in the Amana, at the mouth of the Orinoco, and that he was guided by them to the main river.

<sup>1</sup> Martin's West Indies, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> Raynal's Hist. of the Indies, book xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Martin's West Indies, p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p 258.

He speaks of the intercourse between them and the English, as being of a friendly and virtuous character. Those whom he met appear to have been already reduced by the Spaniards to a state of vassalage ; and it is probable, that as the latter race began to settle on the banks of that river, most of the Arawâks went eastward, to avoid a nation of whom those in British Guiana speak in terms of great dislike and animosity, and of whose oppressive cruelty they entertain a strong remembrance.

They were found settled on the shores of our present colony, by Harcourt and other English captains, in the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The Arawâks, being intelligent, and possessing a strong national feeling, have preserved several traditions of events which must have happened about this time. These chiefly relate to conflicts which took place between their tribe and its various enemies.

They have an indistinct idea of cruelties perpetrated by the Spaniards. Tradition has preserved the remembrance of white men clothed with "sepe-rari" or iron, who drove their fathers before them, and, as some say, hunted them with dogs through the forest.

But by far the greater number of their traditions relate to engagements between themselves and the Caribs on the main land. Various places are pointed out as the spots where these occurred. They seem to have suffered much. The head of the river Arapiaco is said to have been the scene of a horrid



massacre, on one occasion, when the Caribs rose in arms with a design to exterminate their tribe, together with the Waraus. Civilized nations take more pleasure in the remembrance of their victories than in recording their defeats, and this natural feeling is fully shared by the Indian. Accordingly, the circumstances of a victory which they obtained, and which seems to have checked the progress of their unrelenting foes, are still remembered among the Arawâks to the west of Essequibo.

It is said to have occurred in the swampy district near the Waini, whither the Arawâks had retreated from various parts of the country. Expecting to be followed by the Caribs, they placed themselves under the command of a chief, who seems to have been a man of experience and skill.

This leader placed his men in ambush among the islands of a lake or savannah, on each side of a narrow winding channel, through which the invading party must of necessity pass. He there stationed a line of watchmen, who were to communicate by signals to each other the tidings of their approach, so that his warriors might be ready to receive them.

The Caribs are said to have had a great number of canoes of large size, which followed each other in line through the mazy channels of the savannah. As they rounded a certain island, their painted warriors in the first canoe were transfixed by a shower of arrows from an unseen enemy on both sides of them, and totally disabled. Those in the second canoe shared the same fate ; the others, who



could not see what had happened, hurried forward to ascertain the cause of the cries, but each canoe, as it arrived at the fatal spot, was saluted by a deadly shower of arrows. The Arawâks then rushed forward and fought till the victory was completed.

It is said that only two Caribs survived, whose lives were spared, and they were dismissed by the Arawâk chieftain, on promise of a ransom to be paid in cotton hammocks, for the manufacture of which their nation is noted. They were also desired "to assemble their countrymen who remained, and if they were still desirous of war, to bring them on a similar expedition, that they might share the same fate."

The chief of the Pomeroon Arawâks told me, that the spot where the bodies of the slain were interred by the victors is still marked by the traces of three mounds, which were pointed out to him when a boy.<sup>1</sup>

These sanguinary contests probably took place before Europeans settled in their country in any great numbers. The presence of such formidable intruders would naturally give the Caribs and others full occupation in endeavouring to drive them out. The Caribs actually drove the English from their

<sup>1</sup> The circumstances of this tradition have been related to me with some unimportant variations, by different individuals. The first of these was a woman from that part of the country, an intelligent person, who had lived in an English family when young, and spoke our language well. She was also mistress of the Warau tongue, and when I first saw her, was sitting by the dead body of a Warau man, chanting, with melancholy cadence an address to the departed spirit.

first settlements, and the French, who followed in 1640, shared the same fate.

The Dutch obtained a firmer footing, but were continually harassed, until a peace was made about 1686, by Somelsdyk, Governor of Surinam, with all the Indian tribes, who in the course of time became the allies of the colonists, and received annual presents from them.

A new enemy then arose. The number of negroes, who in the course of the next century escaped to the forests, kept both colonists and Indians in alarm, and gave them full occupation. Even when the colonists had made peace with the revolted negroes on the Seramica<sup>1</sup> and others, acknowledged their independence, and engaged their services, by annual presents, to prevent others from joining them, there still remained a feeling of enmity between the red man and the black, leading to frequent collision and bloodshed.

The accounts which the Arawâks have received from their ancestors, represent these negroes as equally ferocious with the Caribs, and more to be dreaded on account of their superior bodily strength. An old Arawâk once told me of a fearful nation, whom he called Maruno, who dwelt to the eastward, who were black in colour, and the natural enemies of the Indians, though living in the forests and following the same way of life. These were of course the Maroon negroes of Berbice and Surinam. From his description it would appear, that they had been

<sup>1</sup> 1749. Stedman, ch. iii.

guilty of great barbarity, mangling the bodies of their slain enemies, and even tearing them to pieces ; a fact which is also attested by those white men who were engaged in the wars against them.<sup>1</sup>

The alliance of the Indians with the colonists was of great service to the latter.<sup>2</sup> On great emergencies, the Caribs were summoned from the interior, while, on ordinary occasions, the Arawâks who resided nearer the plantations were ready to assist, as has been before related. But this intercourse was ruinous to the Arawâks and the others. They were debased by the use of ardent spirits, and their manners contaminated by the vices of civilized men, while the great antidote to the moral poison, the Christian religion, was withheld from them. In the insurrection of 1823, the Indians were called out to assist the colonists, but I am not aware that any use was then made of them, or that they have been employed since.

It is painful to look upon this sketch of the history of the Indian tribes of Guiana. A cloud hangs over their origin. They then appear before us in the sixteenth century ; the Caribi and other ferocious tribes attacking, and the others defending themselves as well as they were able, while the practice of enslaving each other seems to have generally prevailed.

In the course of the next century they were engaged in resisting the encroachments of a fairer

<sup>1</sup> Stedman, ch. xx. p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, p. 373.

and stronger race, which arrived from various countries of Europe with more destructive weapons.

In the eighteenth century, the coast tribes seem to have been generally at peace with each other, but we find the Arawâk and Caribi Indian frequently engaged by the side of the white man in deadly contest with the negro. All this time they were in heathen darkness.

The last few years of the present century, more highly blessed than those which have gone before, have seen those various conflicting races united in peace. The Arawâk, the Carib, the Warau, the Wacawoio, and the Macusi, with the white man and the black, have met together in the same house of prayer, listening to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE REMAINING HEATHEN TRIBES.

Diminution of the numbers of the Indian Tribes.—Their Probable Fate.—Their Readiness to embrace the Religion of Christ.—Encouragement to extend the Sphere of Labour—Suggestions—Heathen Tribes enumerated by Sir R. Schomburgk—Possible Benefit which they might derive in course of years from the Conversion of the Macusis.

SINCE the appearance of Europeans in their land, the Indian tribes have constantly diminished in numbers. In Guiana, as in other parts of the western world, it has been found, that as civilized man has spread, the aboriginal tribes have dwindled away. It has been said of them with truth, "Their forlorn situation engages all our sympathy; their present history is the finale of a tragical drama; a whole race of men is wasting away."<sup>1</sup>

We have described their present state, and traced some portion of their past history. Their future lot is known to God alone. The work of evangelizing them has evidently been committed to us; and, (humanly speaking,) their fate may depend on the manner in which we shall carry it out. It may rest

<sup>1</sup> Schomburgk's Description of British Guiana, p. 51.

with *us*, whether these tribes shall expire one after another, in cold and gloomy heathenism ; or whether the end of their existence, as separate nations, shall be illumined and cheered by the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and their various races become united at our Missions, acquire the English language as their common medium of communication, and gradually forget their ancient distinctions in the common name of Christian.

Why should they exist in spiritual darkness, while we have the means of enlightening their souls, and ameliorating their earthly condition, by giving them the comforts of the Christian religion in this life, and the sweet hope of immortal happiness in the life to come ? Is the painted Indian hunter more incapable of elevation, or more difficult to convert, than the race of men, who, at the period of the redemption, wandered amid the forests of our own fair island ? whose scanty attire, composed of the skins of beasts, hung loosely upon bodies which were painted dark blue or green in various figures, that they might appear more frightful in battle ? There is nothing in the appearance of the Indian more barbarous than was exhibited in that of the ancient Briton ; nor is there anything in their worst superstitions that can compare with the ferocious cruelty of the Druids.

Experience has shown that in Guiana the fields are white already to harvest. Amidst discouragements of a serious nature, some of which have been detailed, the Indians have improved in civilization



wherever a Mission has been planted among them ; and not a few have shown signs of the effect of the Gospel on their hearts and minds. When we look back and see what has been done within a few years, we should "thank God and take courage" to persevere with the work.

To make the work of propagating the Gospel general among the tribes which have been already drawn in part within its influence, a Mission is necessary in every district where the civil government has established an Indian post. The Indians of the Demerara, Berbice, and Corentyn rivers, would thus be provided for, as well as those of the river and colony of Essequibo.

A well supported Mission, with at least two Missionaries, is necessary for the Macusi tribe in the interior ; a site being selected in our undisputed territory. Their numbers, which have been estimated at 3,000, might, by God's blessing, afford an abundant harvest, and would offer a means of communication with other more distant tribes, and probably extend the influence of the Gospel beyond the frontier.

This seems the only method of reaching those wild and barbarous hordes, which have been but lately brought before the public notice by the exertions of that intelligent traveller, Sir R. Schomburgk, from whose works the following brief account is derived.

The ARECUNAS resemble the Macusis in language, but not in features and character. They inhabit the

high table-land, from among which the mountain Roraima rises 8,000 feet above the sea. The historians Montiero and Ribiero describe them as cannibals, and that they perforate their ears, in which they wear bundles of haulms of grass; and that they use quippos, or knotted strings, like the Peruvians, by which they communicate not only numbers, but likewise sentences to each other. They still wear the ornaments alluded to in their ears, and use the quippos, but are no longer cannibals.

The ZAPARAS have arisen from the intermarriages of the Macusis and Arecunas. They are about three hundred in number.

The SOERIKONGS are a tribe which have sprung from the intermarriages of the Arecunas with the Wacawoios. They are, like the latter, a predatory tribe, frequently committing depredations on the Macusis. They are likewise accused of being Kanaimas, or night murderers, and slow poisoners. They threatened to attack the expedition commanded by the learned traveller before mentioned in 1835, and had formed a camp for the purpose, but afterwards abandoned it, and allowed the expedition to pass unmolested.

The WOYAWAIS are a distant tribe, inhabiting the mountains near the sources of the Essequibo. They are thought not to exceed three hundred in number. They are great hunters, and famed for their dogs, with which they carry on a traffic with other tribes. They are filthily dirty in their habits.

The languages of all these tribes, and of some

others not within our boundaries, have more or less affinity to that of the Macusis.

There are several others within the British colony, whose languages are quite distinct.

The most powerful of these are the WAPISIANAS, whose whole number may amount to eight hundred, one half being within our territory. They are more athletic and darker in colour than the Macusis. Their females are often good-looking, and stain and puncture the skin round the mouth in an elliptical form. Their language is very peculiar, and stands isolated among those of the tribes of Guiana.

The ATORAIS are now nearly extinct. Including a sister-tribe, the TAURIS or DAURIS, which formerly dwelt apart in the forests, but have now united with them, the Atorais do not exceed one hundred persons. They appear to be the only tribe in Guiana who place their dead on a funeral pile and burn them. Their language differs materially from that of the Wapisianas and other tribes.

The TARUMAS formerly lived near the mouth of the Rio Negro. The Carmelites had a Mission among them as early as 1670. Disagreeing with other tribes, and being ill used by the Portuguese, a portion of them fled northward, and settled near the head waters of the Essequibo. Death made such ravages among those who remained, that the tribe was considered extinct. Mahanarva, the well-known Caribi chief, brought the first information of their existence to Demerara, but his account was so exaggerated that they were described as amphibious,

and taking shelter in caverns under water. They are about four hundred in number, and their language differs from that of the other Indians of Guiana.

Beside these tribes residing within the boundary claimed by Great Britain, there are others dwelling near the borders, who might in the course of years become Christianised. Some of these are accustomed to visit the Macusis for the purpose of traffic, as the MAIONGKONGS, and the GUINAUS, who manufacture the blow-pipes, which they exchange for the Woralí poison, which the Macusis know best how to prepare.

Other tribes are fierce and dangerous, as the PIANOGHOTTOS, who reside near the head of the Corentyn, and are so averse to intercourse with civilized persons that they have defeated, and in some instances murdered, the crews of expeditions sent from the Amazonas to explore their territory. The ZARAMATAS and the DRIOS do not differ much from this tribe either in language or appearance, except that the Drios tattoo their skins all over.

There are also other tribes, some of which are now almost extinct, as the MAOPITYANS, who, when visited by Sir R. Schomburgk in 1843, had dwindled to thirty-nine individuals. A single hut on the left bank of the upper Caphiwuin sheltered the whole nation. The AMARIPAS have entirely perished; in 1843 a single old woman was the only remnant of this tribe.

Thus throughout Guiana remnants of ancient

nations are found, withering here and there, like the dry bones which were seen in the vision of the prophet. To man it seems next to impossible that they should be ever raised to spiritual life. And so indeed it is. But He with whom all things are possible can do greater things than this. If it seem good in His sight, He can cause the breath of His life-giving word to enter into them, that they may live ; and by His Spirit form from these dry fragments a portion of the Church of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ Son of Man, Can these bones live? O Lord God, Thou knowest ! ”

THE END.

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1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem.

2. In the second part, we consider the case of a single particle.

3. The third part is devoted to the case of a system of particles.

4. In the fourth part, we consider the case of a continuous medium.

5. The fifth part is devoted to the case of a system of continuous media.

6. In the sixth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

7. The seventh part is devoted to the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

8. In the eighth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

9. The ninth part is devoted to the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

10. In the tenth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

11. The eleventh part is devoted to the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

12. In the twelfth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

13. The thirteenth part is devoted to the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

14. In the fourteenth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

15. The fifteenth part is devoted to the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

16. In the sixteenth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

17. The seventeenth part is devoted to the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

18. In the eighteenth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

19. The nineteenth part is devoted to the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

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